Prince of This World [167, 188, 589]

By Gregory Klimov

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The electronic version of this book may contain misprints. [84, 137, 258, 274]

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Forbidden Fruit

Foreword to Grigory Klimov's novel **Prince of This World**, Globus Publishers, San Francisco, 1980.

Introduction by Dr. S. P. Novikov, Professor of Contemporary Soviet Literature, Stratford University

"But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die."

Genesis 2:17

Can one in our time write such a book as has never existed before? In our time that is rather difficult. But Klimov has written such a book. However, for the very same reason why such books did not exist before, Klimov's *Prince* became something like a forbidden fruit. They say forbidden fruit is sweet. As soon as the Soviet Union bans the writings of some author, and puts the author himself in an insane asylum or a labour camp, that forbidden fruit promptly appears in the West with great fanfare. And everyone reads with interest: "So what did they jail him for?" But Klimov's *Prince* is a forbidden fruit **twice** over. On the one hand, it is one of the most powerful and vivid anti-Soviet books - which are naturally banned in the USSR. On the other hand, *Prince* (even in its early, relatively innocent drafts) frightened almost the entire Russian press in the West. They'd start printing it - then drop it. As if they'd burned their fingers. Even the very adventures of *Prince* in print are so mysterious and piquant that they read like a thrilling novel. [104, 355]

For example, when *Prince*, in which the mysterious 13th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is described as dealing with all sorts of devilry, began to be published in an Argentine newspaper *Nasha Strana* ("Our Country"), the editor of the paper, Dubrovsky, on 13 July 1965 printed a sweeping announcement where he wrote the following: [4, 45, 60, 68, 115, 148, 182, 187, 244, 388, 418, 503, 712]

"Grigory Petrovich Klimov - author of the widely known book The Berlin Kremlin, which became known to the whole world because its abridged content appeared in the 12-language Reader's Digest... with a print run of over 17 million copies. The total print run of the book in all languages amounts to 200,000 copies... Besides such wide distribution of the book in various languages, The Berlin Kremlin has traversed the screens of the entire free world. An American-German-French company produced three films based on it. The German one, titled Weg ohne Umkehr ("No Way Back"), was awarded Best German Film of the Year at the International Film Festival in Berlin in 1954. The English version, titled The Road of No Return, and the American No Way Back stayed on screen for a long time. [1, 138, 230, 343, 362]

I won't go on about how vividly the novel is written. The reader's attention is captured from the first page and is held in suspense until the very end. Undoubtedly, G. Klimov's literary talent is great and it is not for nothing that his previous book *The Berlin Kremlin* also enjoyed

resounding success. Everything is clear to everyone who has read this book, which needs to be translated into English and disseminated as soon as possible."

One way or another, Klimov's *Prince* is a book so extraordinary and original that I became interested in getting better acquainted with the story of how this book came to be, and with its author. Grigory Klimov was born in the city of Novocherkassk, into a doctor's family. He finished school with top honours (what is called a gold medal) and graduated from the Novocherkassk Industrial Institute with a degree in electrical engineering. He then attended graduate school at the Moscow Power Engineering Institute while simultaneously completing the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages. During the war, thanks to his knowledge of foreign languages, he was sent to the Military-Diplomatic Academy in Moscow, after finishing which he served in the Soviet Military Administration in Berlin. After demobilisation from the army, instead of returning to Moscow, Klimov crossed over to West Germany, where he wrote his book *The Berlin Kremlin*. [168, 344, 376, 389, 405]

It must be said that in America, this kind of political thriller is often written by "ghostwriters" - that is, ghost authors. The most striking example is Kravchenko's I Chose Freedom, which even to this day has not been published in Russian and whose "author" later shot himself. Therefore, when The Berlin Kremlin appeared, the relevant persons and organisations were very surprised that someone had written such a book himself and they became interested in the author. After this, Klimov worked in the Harvard Project in Munich1. It is known about this Harvard University project that it carried out extensive psychological research on the new wave of émigrés from the USSR - so to speak, the homo sovieticus - that the best American experts in Soviet affairs worked there, that several million dollars were allocated to this project and that it was conducted in 1949-51 mainly in Munich. And all sorts of other tests, where through psychoanalysis all kinds of ticklish psychological complexes were investigated. [340, 347]

One of these complexes was some mysterious "Lenin complex." As was written in the American press (and in *Novoye Russkoye Slovo*), the Harvard Project was guided primarily by Professor Nathan Leites, author of the book *The Moscow Trials of 1936-37* - those same strange trials where the entire Leninist guard was completely destroyed, labelled as mad dogs. They also wrote that the Harvard Project was fundamentally based on the mysterious "Lenin complex." By the way, it should be noted that in the circles of the Russian émigrés the Harvard Project for some reason had an ill repute. People would shake their heads: "Hm, they want to save Mother Russia from the Bolsheviks - with the help of Trotskyists and Mensheviks." And some wags quipped: "After all, Russian émigrés have long been saying: *'Against the Bolsheviks - even with the devil.'* Well, the practical Americans decided to take that very devil as their ally." [6, 11, 292, 377, 403, 406, 420, 701, 727]

One way or another, judging by all the evidence, in the Harvard Project scientific plans were being developed and appropriate cadres were being sought for the psychological war between West and East that was beginning at that time. Soon after this, a whole series of organisations in the realm of that very psychological warfare appeared. Judging by the American press, all of these were special projects funded by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Let us not be afraid to repeat what the free American press itself writes. All the more so since this is being done in our Russian name, and we ourselves know little of it. For several years, Klimov stood at the head of one of these special psychological warfare projects. He was chairman of the Central Association of Post-War Émigrés from the USSR (TsOPE) and the chief editor of the magazine *Svoboda* ("Freedom") in the Russian language and the journal *Antikommunist* ("Anticommunist") in the German language. One can be sure that a master as well-informed

as the CIA sifted through all possible candidates in advance - and chose the very best. [8, 9, 293, 421, 422, 423, 641]

Indeed, it is not easy to find in the West a Soviet person who could be a writer without the help of ghostwriters and who could today edit a journal in Russian, tomorrow address a university audience in German and the day after tomorrow speak before the American Congress in English. Mass rallies in Berlin, mass print runs of *The Berlin Kremlin*, a film based on that book - and millions of TsOPE leaflets in East Germany. Klimov's name made far more noise in the European press than all the other U.S. "projects" put together. Evidently that is why Klimov was forgiven the one single minus from the perspective of the Harvard Project: although he had the same gold-medal education as Lenin, he did **not** have the notorious "Lenin complex."

In summary, one can say that Klimov was a brilliant leader of one of the most top-secret special projects of the U.S. CIA and a distinguished "ace" of American psychological warfare. In this work he evidently became well acquainted with the inner workings of both American and Soviet intelligence. In 1955 Klimov moved to America and returned to his profession as an electrical engineer. At the same time, he began working on a book in which he creatively transfigured his rich experience in the field of psychological warfare. Armed with the key to the Harvard Project in the form of the mysterious "Lenin complex," Klimov posed himself the question: what had the Soviet secret police been doing in this same field? After all, the Soviets simply could not have been unaware of those principles on which the Harvard Project was based and which are described in any textbook of psychology.

In American books analysing the work of the CIA, it is written that in U.S. Professional jargon this work is divided into "black magic" and "white magic," with "grey magic" dangling in between. U.S. Propaganda is likewise divided into black, grey and white. White propaganda is, presumably, handled by the Voice of America. And grey and black - by various covert special projects. It was these sorts of activities, by all indications, that the Harvard Project was engaged in. In every serious research institute dealing with such matters, if one group of scientists is developing some project, then another group of scientists, like a staff war-game of "Reds vs. Blues," is simultaneously developing the corresponding counter-project, in order to anticipate and forestall what the opponent might undertake in that field. It is exactly such a counter-project - in the form of a novel - that Klimov carried out. He did what perhaps the CIA had failed to do. The result is supremely simple: both the American and the Soviet intelligence services work in this area according to absolutely identical scientific principles. Everyone knows that the secret services - or, as they are called, "the wily organs" - be it the CIA or the KGB (the Soviet secret police), carefully study the psychology of those subjects who interest them. An example of this is the Harvard Project. But not everyone knows that modern psychology, especially those dark areas that all sorts of "wily organs" are most interested in, is based largely on Freudian psychoanalysis. An example of that are the very tests that were carried out in the Harvard Project. What does the average person know about Freudianism? Ah, they'll say, some nonsense that a person's psyche is somehow connected with his "sex." But a specialist would make one small correction. Just a single word… Yet I would prefer not to utter that magic word, so as not to spoil the secret of *Prince* prematurely. Knowing the secrets of *Prince*, you will understand all the enigmas of psychological warfare. [30, 35, 101, 189, 195, 318, 398, 415, 666, 722]

Isn't it strange that Victor Kravchenko, who chose freedom and caused such a stir, in the end chose a bullet to his own forehead? Isn't it strange that those who followed him to freedom -

M. Kosenkina and her colleague Samarin - soon after ended up in mental hospitals? No, no, not Soviet ones, but American mental hospitals. Having the keys of knowledge that are given in *Prince*, you will understand why the Soviet government puts its freedom-loving writer-rebels in insane asylums and labour camps. You will understand all the dramas and comedies of the psychological war, right up to the anecdotal defection to America of Stalin's daughter, whom they made into a millionaire over here. In the Harvard Project, the best American specialists - wizards in Soviet affairs - worked. Klimov did his work entirely alone. Several million dollars were paid for the Harvard Project. Do you think anyone even said thank you to Klimov? So far I only know that the Harvard wizards curse the day and hour that Klimov entered the Harvard Project. But that is perfectly natural, since some aspects of that project were, it would appear, under the strictest secrecy - though the Soviet intelligence service presumably knew all about it. [605]

Let's take a concrete example. On 31 October 1953 in New York it was the eve of All Saints' Day - Halloween, the day of all sinners - when children are frolicking in the streets in masks of witches, devils and sorcerers. And in Moscow on that same day, an American professor of social sciences, Frederick Barghoorn, a specialist on the Soviet Union and propaganda who was gathering materials in Moscow for his book *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*, a quiet 52-year-old bachelor peacefully living with his elderly mother, was arrested. After Professor Barghoorn's arrest, the American side raised a wild clamour across the whole world. It seemed that something more serious was hidden behind this arrest and the American government wanted by any means - and as quickly as possible - to secure Professor Barghoorn's release. Before he let anything slip. They brought every possible influence to bear - up to a personal protest by President Kennedy. That alone, in such cases, is quite an extraordinary measure. Upon returning to America, Professor Barghoorn was astonishingly silent. Even when one of the Congressional committees summoned him to testify about his arrest in Moscow, he refused to appear in Congress voluntarily and he had to be compelled by a special subpoena - for evading which one risks all sorts of severe penalties. Isn't that absurd? It seemed that Professor Barghoorn was afraid of letting slip even a single extra word. But he *did* let slip one word. As *The New York Times* reported, in an interrogation at the State Department Professor Barghoorn revealed that during his detention in Moscow the questioning focused predominantly on… the Harvard Project, with which he had once been associated. Apparently, that was the reason for his arrest. Professor Barghoorn was released on 15 November - at President Kennedy's insistence. And six days later, on 22 November, President Kennedy was killed by Lee Oswald's bullet. And two days later, Oswald was killed by Jack Ruby's bullet. And immediately over America hung a mystery that will hardly ever be unraveled. But the point is that from the very first newspaper reports it was absolutely clear that Oswald and Ruby were typical representatives of that very nebulous yet at the same time quite definite category of people which is identified by means of Rorschach tests. The very tests that were used in the Harvard Project. Knowing that category, one can understand why Professor Barghoorn's arrest so alarmed the American government, and why after returning to America Professor Barghoorn remained so stubbornly silent. [10, 15, 100, 385, 407, 424, 429, 709, 731]

At one point reports flickered in the American press about a Soviet "quantum" weapon. It was written that in the Soviet Union they had invented some new secret weapon, based on completely new principles - something like death rays. They wrote that this weapon was so terrifying that people were even afraid to talk about it. But let's not be so skittish and let's state what this weapon is. This weapon is based on certain dark laws of social psychology. On those very laws which, by all indications, were being studied in the Harvard Project. And

that is why the Soviet secret police, it seems, decided to "milk" the quantum professor Barghoorn. In a tragic irony of fate, President Kennedy perished because of the very thing he was covering up and protecting in the person of Professor Barghoorn. In such conditions a logical question might arise for some: did they strike from Moscow with that same weapon? Considering Oswald's stay in Moscow and his Russian wife, theoretically this is entirely possible. But the truth of it we shall never know. The Harvard Project was not a private initiative of Harvard University, but originated from the U.S. Government. Clearly, in such conditions all the professors of the Harvard Project - by order from on high - will keep silent just as Professor Barghoorn did, who had to be dragged to a Congressional hearing by force. In their defence, the State Department and various "wily organs" will pipe up to say: these matters are so complex and secret that they cannot be spoken of. Besides, we are not detectives, only modest men of letters. Taking all these circumstances into account, let's assume that the professors of the Harvard Project did nothing particularly out of the ordinary. We'll grant them absolution. But from the given situation, as in an Armenian joke, there remains only one single alternative way out: it would mean that they were engaged in monkey business - that is, they were blowing millions to the wind. So take your pick as to which is better. American sleuths in Washington racked their brains: why was Barghoorn arrested only *thirteen years* after his involvement in the Harvard Project? Even though in the interim he had visited Moscow several times?! [13, 94, 97, 341]

We are not detectives, just writers, but they say that shortly before Barghoorn's arrest Klimov let his *Prince* roam through the émigré editorial offices. The editors found themselves in the same position as Gogol's devil who stole the moon from the sky. *Prince* scorched their hands, and they didn't know what to do with it. So they sent it off - away from sin - to the appropriate "instances" to check what it was. But those "instances" are rather convoluted. Let's recall, for example, the case of Kim Philby: the Number 2 man in the British Intelligence Service and a holder of the Order of the British Empire, who at that very time (up to 1963) was directing all the Anglo-American intelligence operations against the Soviets and, simultaneously, for 34 years was a Soviet agent?! After which Kim comfortably fled to Moscow, where he receives a pension and writes his memoirs. It turns out that the most reliable way to relay something to Soviet intelligence is to send good material through the Western intelligence agencies. Reliable and completely safe. Be that as it may, the fact remains that just after *Prince* had its little stroll through the editorial offices and agencies, they went and arrested poor Professor Barghoorn. After that, the State Department categorically forbade all Soviet-affairs specialists who had taken part in the Harvard Project from travelling to the Soviet Union. No wonder that afterward those specialists in the "Lenin complex" cursed Klimov even more than they cursed Lenin. By the way, it is not at all necessary to be a Harvard professor to know the "Lenin complex." [14, 370, 425, 428, 730]

For example, even from the newspaper reports about Kim Philby one can say that besides the Order of the British Empire and the Order of the Red Banner (with which he was decorated in Moscow), Kim also possessed the "Lenin complex." So, we have already determined that Lee Oswald, Jack Ruby and Kim Philby all had this mysterious complex. To avoid anyone feeling left out, we can add that this complex was possessed not only by the creator of the Soviet state, Lenin, but also by the creator of the American state, George Washington. So from the perspective of psychological warfare, this weapon is rather effective and double-edged. [210]

But enough about that. Klimov's *Prince* is, above all, a gripping novel. And if we are talking here about the Harvard Project, that is necessary because the Harvard Project - in the person of the best American "wizard" minds on Soviet matters - confirms all those extraordinary

things that are described in *Prince*. It is no coincidence that *Prince* devotes such attention to the Great Purge, where the Leninist guard - people with that very "Lenin complex" on which the Harvard Project was based - were purged. Therefore, from the factual side, everything Klimov writes - all of it has been tested and signed off on by America's finest think-tank. When *Prince* was first printed in serial form, the Russian typesetters - who themselves had lived through the lost paradise of the Revolution, the purgatory of Stalin's purges and the hell of World War II - these hardened people sometimes had hands trembling so much that they muddled the type and the proof-readers, in their excitement, made mistakes in the galleys, ran to the editor and asked: "Tell us, is it really true?" To a large extent, *Prince* concerns the work of the Soviet secret police - at the highest, so to speak, scientific-ideological level - and describes all of this with stunning precision. Afterward people speculated that the author had obtained at his disposal the most secret archives of the Soviet secret police; others said, on the contrary, that these were the archives of some American super-intelligence agency. Some insist it's both one and the other. A whole host of legends immediately sprang up around *Prince*. One claims that Klimov didn't write this book at all - that an entire learned collegium of Jesuits did. So profoundly does it know what is called God and the Devil. And others say the opposite - that this *Prince* well deserves to land on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (the Vatican's list of banned books). Philosophers, musing about the devil and the truth, note sceptically that the truth about the devil is such a filthy thing that one drop of it clouds life, just as a drop of water clouds a glass of absinthe. But one can become intoxicated from this. Furthermore, philosophers say that the devil is dangerous only when we do not see him. But once we see him, he becomes revolting, ridiculous, pitiable. Therefore, as the experts say, the devil's first trick is to prove that he doesn't exist, that he is Nobody and Nothing. That is precisely why *Prince*, where this devil is shown in a rather naked form, immediately became a forbidden fruit. And later it will become an apple of discord. [12, 64, 124, 180, 426, 499, 539, 581]

Some might say: "Ah, all this is high philosophy and I'm an ordinary little person - what do I care about it?" Fine, let's assume you are not familiar with the problems that are described in *Prince*. Of such a situation the Bible says: "Having eyes, they see not; having ears, they hear not." "Ah," they'll say, "the same old song - about the Bible. And who believes in God now? Only unenlightened people." But the whole point is that in *Prince* these old problems are examined from a new point of view - from the point of view of **dialectical materialism** - and they become objective reality. Let's take a concrete example. Suppose you are a young man. Even with a university education, and you think you know everything about everything and you've decided to marry. Naturally to an educated young lady from a good family. But do you know that half of your potential brides are not at all what you perceive them to be? If you had a magic crystal and could look into the future, you would see that half of your prospective brides will bring you nothing but misfortune - these are inevitably bad marriages, dirty divorces, broken families, agonising and shameful diseases, troubled children, where you will not understand until your dying day why all of it happened and what for. Yes, statistics says it's half. But it doesn't tell which half, who exactly. And you have eyes - and do not see, you have ears - and do not hear. What to do, then? Would you like to have such a wizard's crystal, to reveal the future? And to avoid such a future? Very well, I will give you a prescription: [351]

1. After reading *Prince*, give it to your prospective bride. Or prospective groom. Or your future daughter-in-law - or future son-in-law. Only, this prescription is secret: so first tear out the page on which these lines are written. [359]

2. Then ask: “Well - how was it? Do you like it or not?” And watch the results. Only watch carefully. And, as in a magic crystal, you will see the future.

It’s obvious that no gypsy fortune-teller could divine it so well for you. And I give you my word on that! This recipe is tried and true. When *Prince* was being serialised in *Russkaya Zhizn* (“Russian Life”), many readers immediately sensed that this was a unique thing. They began cutting out *Prince* and making their own clippings. Since then these clippings have passed from hand to hand like forbidden literature. And I too have such a clipping, which I let my acquaintances read. I must say that *Prince* turned out to have a marvellous property: it acts on people like litmus paper for laboratory analysis. By how a reader reacts to *Prince*, you immediately see what sort of person he is. Some read *Prince* with great interest. And others make a face and cringe, like the devil from incense. So the prescription is proven. And if you practice a bit in this art, you will become a better psychologist than Dostoevsky, Freud and Dr. Kinsey combined. But it is precisely because of this that *Prince* became a forbidden fruit - this legion does not want to be seen - because in the Bible it speaks of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, whose fruits are forbidden fruits. And Klimov has grabbed hold of this tree - and is shaking it like a pear tree. Well, there you have the results. [5, 89, 193, 206, 335, 419, 596]

In conclusion, one can say that Prince is a kind of story of a Soviet Dr. Faust in search of the keys to good and evil, where one can encounter both good evil and evil good. Here one wants to draw a parallel with the novel Doctor Faustus by the Nobel laureate Thomas Mann. The hero of that novel, in order to attain genius, makes a pact with the devil in the sense that he deliberately infects himself with syphilis. That is the path Thomas Mann takes. When you read Prince, compare Mann’s syphilitic devil with Klimov’s dialectical devil. And decide for yourself - which of them is closer to the truth? From the perspective of dialectical materialism, the biblical devil, whose name is Legion, is simply a complex social disease. [17, 52, 139, 140, 384, 431, 708]

Indeed, there are certain parallels with syphilis: this disease is transmitted by inheritance, stretches over several generations and has several stages - a kind of members, candidates, fellow travellers and sympathisers of that legion - but this disease is such that some specialists, like the Nobel laureate Thomas Mann, prefer to pin the blame on innocent syphilis. How many of these legionnaires are there? American statistics from Dr. Kinsey says that among the American population - that is, in good, cultured society - such legionnaires, candidates, fellow travellers and sympathisers will already make up 50%. And among poets, writers and, in general, literary folk - 75%. And immediately it becomes absurd. Why, that’s the ruling party!? Yes, that’s why the Bible says - the prince of this world. But this prince will always strive to prove that he doesn’t exist. That’s why Klimov’s *Prince* ended up classified as anti-party literature. If we translate the American statistics into the language of dialectical materialism, it comes out like this: 75% of literary people - that is, 3 out of 4 - after reading *Prince* will get agitated, protest and insist that none of this is so. And the fourth one, being in the minority, will shrug his shoulders and give in. That’s why *Prince* got stuck at publishers. [19, 237, 356, 368, 433, 680]

If we take one more step along the road of dialectical materialism, it comes out as follows. Take, for example, one of the journals where *Prince* ran into a ban. The editor is a charming lady and even a revolutionary. But her grown daughter keeps talking about suicide. An ordinary occurrence in the families of revolutionaries: so it was with Karl Marx, with

Bakunin, Trotsky, Lenin and Stalin. But if this daughter reads *Prince*, where all that is explained, then Mama might have a lot of troubles. So the caring mother cut off the printing of *Prince* after the first chapter. The reason is perfectly understandable. Why be embarrassed? As the saying goes, one is not ashamed before doctors or artists. Besides, here everyone is among their own. See how simple it all turns out… if you have a magic crystal. Remember these figures as firmly as the multiplication table: **37% - 50% - 75%**. Because these are the keys to understanding all social enigmas and paradoxes. Therefore, when President Johnson proclaimed the "Great Society," voices in the press more and more often declared - "the sick society." And when in the Soviet Union they began tightening the screws - using the American statistics (75%) - the very first people they went after were the poets and writers. In this lies the mystery of Stalin - and of Stalin's purges and labour camps. In this lies the mystery of Hitler and Hitler's gas chambers. Knowing these keys, you will comprehend all the riddles of the human soul. Starting from why America's sex goddess Marilyn Monroe ended up committing suicide, and ending with why your neighbour divorced her husband. But you will immediately feel a host of objections from all sides. Then remember the multiplication table: **37% - 50% - 75%…** *members - candidates - fellow travellers - sympathisers*… And also remember that ever since biblical times this thing has been called: "*my name is Legion*," who is a liar and the Father of lies, always striving to prove that he does not exist. And then you will understand why the Bible is still considered the wisest book in the world. But, as they say, the devil is not as fearsome as he is painted. With the keys of knowledge, you will see not only the sinners, but also the righteous and the truest saints. [18, 432]

If we sum up the problems of *Prince*, history has shown that a **religious** approach is the most rational solution to these grave problems. This I say as a man who is far from religious. Because where others sought different "solutions" - there they arrived at purges, camps and gas chambers. It should be emphasised that the realm of the Great Purge which is described in *Prince* - the 13th Department - concerns only and exclusively those social elements who made the revolution, which then, as the old saying goes, devours its own children like a sow devouring her piglets. At the same time, it is a monument to those innocent victims who fell under the wheels of the bloody Moloch of revolution. And it can be noted further that after *Prince* became a forbidden fruit, the author revised it - and strengthened even more precisely those moments that make it so delicate for some - and so instructive for others.

Now, a word on the artistic side of *Prince*. They say that when this novel was being printed in excerpts, the American CIA, after the fact, began making inquiries as to whether Klimov, in reality, had a living brother whom he had portrayed in the figure of the Soviet Dr. Faust - the tragic and sinister Marshal of State Security of the USSR and the Red Cardinal behind the Soviet leaders. Even with such consummate experts as the CIA, it turned out exactly the same as with those classic pigeons that pecked at the grapes in the painter's picture. With his *Prince*, Klimov proved that it was not for nothing that he had been a well-deserved "ace" of American psychological warfare. Now he has written a book such as never existed before and which became a forbidden fruit both in the West and in the East. [20, 80, 91, 209, 517, 553, 599]

But in the modern Western world a book's "forbidden" status is the very best advertisement for it. Moreover, now, in 1970, all bans have fallen and - with the blessing of the U.S. Supreme Court - absolutely any pornography is published freely, which, by the way, is thickly laced with appeals to nihilism, anarchy and revolution. Hmm, from this point of view *Prince* has broken all records! Therefore let's repeat the record tally: *Prince* was rejected by not only almost all Russian journals and publishing houses, but also by practically all

American (50), German (20) and French (10) publishers. So it's the most genuine forbidden fruit. And when this conspiracy of silence around the forbidden fruit is finally burst, I can just imagine what howling, squealing and screeching will ensue. Such that it will be as if someone had stepped on the Devil's own tail, and then the forbidden fruit will become an apple of discord. But precisely thanks to this, Klimov's *Prince of This World* will take its place on the bookshelves alongside Machiavelli's *The Prince*. [153]

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Chapter 1: The Silent Angel

Having eyes, see ye not? Having ears, hear ye not?

- Mark 8:18

When Maksim Rudnev was a child - this was still before the Revolution - his mother would make him say his prayers before bed. Maksim would mutter the Lord's Prayer indifferently under his breath, then add a personal request to God:
'Dear God, please make me big and strong. Yesterday Fedka the Cross-Eyed caught me in the neighbour's yard again and beat me up. Make it so I can beat everyone. Just with my left hand, with one little finger.' [44, 71, 145, 173, 235, 387, 484, 506, 557, 574, 614, 655, 711]

He repeated this plea after every fight with Fedka the Cross-Eyed, who lived nearby and was known as the worst hooligan in the whole area. After thinking a moment, Maksim would whisper a trade-off:
'If you want, God, shorten my life a bit in return…'

Boris, on the other hand, born after the Revolution, had a more practical outlook from childhood. If he left any food on his plate, their mother would say seriously:
'Look, Bobka, what you leave on your plate is your strength. If you don't eat it, all the girls will beat you up later.' [111, 136, 174, 551, 575]

The boy believed her and was willing to lick the plate clean and burst rather than let the girls end up stronger than him. The habit of cleaning his plate stayed with him for life.

Later it emerged that Maksim was left-handed. The younger brother teased the elder:
'Oi, you lefty! Go on, throw a stone with your right hand!'

But their mother said sternly:
'Don't laugh, Bobka. God punished him so he wouldn't make silly requests to God again.'

Despite being left-handed, Maksim finished school with excellent marks. He entered the history faculty at Moscow University and dreamed of becoming a professor. Alongside his academic ambition, he enjoyed ordering people about. So he soon joined the Party and was even promoted as secretary of the faculty Party organisation.

At home, Maksim liked to emphasise his role as the elder brother. He often sent Boris with notes to girls he was courting, but only when success was already assured - as a witness to his conquests. If things were less certain, Maksim found other ways - without witnesses.

Although Boris was much younger, he always regarded his elder brother rather sceptically. Perhaps because Maksim always sought chances to boss others around, while Boris couldn't stand being bossed about. Or perhaps because left-handed Maksim could wiggle his ears and enjoyed showing this off.

'Exactly like a donkey,' the younger would say.

Even so, Maksim graduated from university with distinction. Because he had shown promise as secretary of the faculty Party cell, instead of working as a history teacher in his field, he received a Party-line appointment to the GPU [Historical note: GPU 1922-1923 in the RSFSR, OGPU 1923-1934 in the USSR and NKVD from 1934. Terms are used in their period sense.]. The rank of GPU authorised officer, then equivalent to a captain's commission, suited Maksim's ambitions perfectly - especially the dashing military uniform and crimson tabs, which inspired fear in others. [123, 435, 436, 448]

Maksim told no one about his new post. Then one day, he suddenly appeared at home in full GPU uniform. On his belt, in a brand-new holster, gleamed a small Korovin-model Browning - considered particularly stylish in the GPU. [462]

Their father, an elderly gynaecologist, shook his head disapprovingly when he saw the sinister crimson tabs:
'I try to prolong people's lives, and you're going to spend yours shortening them. Not a good profession.'

The only person unmoved by Maksim's uniform and pistol was his younger brother. Their first serious clash came when Boris turned fourteen. Maksim was at the table filling out a service questionnaire. Keeping pace with the times and his new rank, he wrote the vague term 'working people' in the section on parents. Boris noticed and took it to mean that his brother was disowning their father.

'Father's not a worker, he's a doctor,' he said. 'Why are you lying?'
'None of your business,' the elder replied. 'Typical lefty,' the younger sneered. 'Does everything left-handed.'
'You little brat!' the GPU officer snapped. 'I'll box your ears!'
'Just try it,' the schoolboy replied.

To even the odds, he clutched a fork in his fist and watched his brother's every move with such deliberate calm that Maksim decided against testing him.

Strangely, Maksim wasn't offended in the least. On the contrary, he even boasted to his friends later:
'My little brother nearly stuck a fork in my gut. Best leave him alone, that one.'

But soon enough he forgot his own advice. The next clash, more serious still, took place shortly after the GPU was renamed the NKVD.

They lived on a quiet edge of Moscow in an outbuilding tucked behind the yard. In winter, when deep snow blanketed the courtyard, the tiled Dutch stoves were fired up and it was pleasant to warm your back against the glazed tiles. Coal and wood had to be carried up by the bucket from the cellar, which meant going out into the snow - not exactly pleasant. These cellar runs were the brothers' shared duty, though since Maksim had acquired his crimson tabs, he had grown extremely reluctant. [438]

One day their mother sent Maksim for coal. Boris lay in the next room, on a large carpeted chest that doubled as his bed, reading H. Rider Haggard's thrilling novel *Montezuma's Daughter*. [439, 440, 469]

The elder brother walked into Boris's room and casually ordered:
'Bobka, go fetch some coal!'
'Mother sent you - you go,' the younger retorted. 'Better listen when you're told.'
'I'll go when Mother tells me to, not you.'
'If you're not out there in three minutes, I'll come back with the dog lash!' the NKVD officer threatened, then left the room.

The dog whip always hung on the corridor hook - as befitted a home with a German shepherd. [449]

The younger put down his book, got up from the chest and quietly opened the bottom drawer of his desk. Under his physics and chemistry textbooks lay a brass knuckle-duster, already tested in a few fights. He slipped it onto his hand, lay back down, right hand in his pocket and resumed reading *Montezuma's Daughter* with his left.

He was at the part where the unfortunate prisoner is tied to a stone altar to be sacrificed, and the sinister Aztec priest approaches with a sacrificial knife. Just then, Maksim entered, holding the dog whip.

'I'm counting to three,' he said. 'One... Two... Three!'

Maksim later described what followed to his friends like this:
'Wow... I'd never seen anything like it. The kid jumped from lying flat on his back. The chest to the door - six metres, minimum. But he sprang into the air and leapt at me like a tiger. Like someone stuck a knife in him. Me with the whip - and him on me with the knuckle-duster.'
'No way!' his friends said. 'Yeah... What a scuffle it was. Smashed the wardrobe to bits. Broke two legs off the table. Don't even mention the chairs - splinters, the lot. Later I checked the chest - the lid had cracked. That was from when he landed on it, back first, leaping at me. The stove was the only thing left intact.'
'So who won?'
'Draw!' Maksim said with some pride in his younger brother. 'At school they called him the ox! No one can handle him. He can already do "the sun" on the horizontal bar.'
'So who fetched the coal?'
'Mother did. Then he took the bucket off her, and told me: "Just you wait till next time!" Little devil. But you can count on him.' [450]

And in that respect, Maksim was not wrong: if the younger brother said something, you could count on him. They didn't have to wait long for next time...

At the school where Boris studied, there was an amateur performance evening. After the performances came dancing in the gym hall and after the dancing - as usual - a brawl in the street with boys from the neighbouring school.

At the height of the scuffle, Boris's classmate, Ivan Strannik, suddenly fired shots into the air from a Mauser he had stolen from his father, who worked as a censor at the city council. Not knowing who was shooting, both groups scattered in panic. Ivan himself, frightened by his own bravado, was the first to flee - but not before slipping the pistol into Boris's hand. [69, 306, 442, 452, 654]

The next morning, Boris sat in his room awaiting Ivan and, out of curiosity, was dismantling the massive Mauser. Maksim happened to enter. Seeing a real pistol - and not just any pistol, but a Mauser - in his younger brother's hands, Maksim was so startled he said nothing at first, then quietly stepped out and began whispering with their mother.

'Boris, go fetch some firewood from the cellar!' their mother called.

Boris reassembled the Mauser, put it in his pocket and headed out. The NKVD officer seized the opportunity to search his brother's room. Not finding the pistol, he grabbed the dreaded dog whip - which in his mind represented the symbol of power in the house - and dashed into the yard after Boris. [134]

'Hand over the pistol!' he barked. 'No,' the younger answered firmly, reaching into his pocket. The elder raised the whip:
'Yes or no?'
Instead of replying, Boris drew his hand from his pocket and a flash of flame and smoke from a pistol shot hit his brother square in the face. Maksim froze, arm raised, as blasts from the heavy-calibre weapon struck him at point-blank range like jets from a fire extinguisher. He staggered backwards towards the porch.

'Drop the whip!' Boris ordered. 'Hands up!'

The NKVD officer obediently dropped the whip into the snow and raised his hands. 'Get inside! Quickly!' commanded Boris.

Once his older brother disappeared through the door, the younger leapt over the fence like a hare. If the police came, Maksim could explain why gunfire had broken out in broad daylight. Meanwhile, Boris, wearing only a shirt and holding up his trousers with one hand (they sagged from the weight of the pistol in his pocket), ploughed through the deep snow to return the Mauser to Ivan. How Ivan explained the missing cartridges to his father remained unknown.

That evening, when their father the doctor heard about the incident, he grumbled:
'We've got Cossack blood in our line, so there's bound to be some Polish blood in the family too. Turkish as well. Looks like Maksim's got the Pole in him: no money, but plenty of pride. And Boris is a pure Turk, a real bashi-bazouk.' [107, 129, 453]

Maksim considered himself the hero of the day and boasted:
'Borya shot at me and didn't hit once.'
'I was aiming past your ears,' the schoolboy said reluctantly. 'Like a lion-tamer in a circus.'

The old house's wooden boards were riddled with holes from pulled nails. Later Maksim showed these holes to his friends and proudly said:
'See this? Borya shot at me. Riddled the house. What a daredevil, eh!'

Some people cannot live with their kin on equal footing. They always try to play the master, but if that fails, they bow to anyone stronger. Maksim was one of those. Unable to dominate his younger brother, he not only accepted equality, but even began to defer slightly. Trying to earn Boris's trust - despite the age gap - he frequently included him in gatherings with his friends and confided his secrets. Boris, shaped by experience, kept a cautious distance.

The differences between the brothers showed in many ways. Maksim was lean and fine-boned, with grey eyes and light, slightly wavy hair of which he was very proud. His lips were thin, tense and imperious. He used to say he had the same mouth as Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. As a student he had taken up athletics, was a strong swimmer and skied well.

Boris, broad-shouldered and dark-skinned, preferred weightlifting and gymnastics on apparatus. The elder brother was impulsive; the younger, enduring.

Maksim had many friends, though they changed frequently. Boris had fewer, but they rarely changed. Maksim was constantly borrowing books from his friends. And those same ex-friends often turned up at Boris's door, a little embarrassed, asking to have their books back - books that the elder brother had borrowed years ago.

When Boris reached Year 8, he became interested in hunting and bought himself a Frolovka with a four-round magazine. Instead of buckshot, he loaded it with chopped lead piping. As a proper hunter would, he hung the loaded gun by the head of his bed. [444]

One day, returning from school, he caught the sharp scent of hunting powder at the doorstep. The shotgun lay on the bed and on the oak tabletop where Boris did his homework, there was a torn and jagged trail from the blast. The chopped lead charge had grazed the table and buried itself deep in the wall.

Boris's heart sank: what if…? He looked round the room, searching for blood. Seeing none, he went to find Maksim, who sat in the kitchen in his snappy NKVD uniform, looking sheepish.

'So, how's the shotgun shoot?' Boris asked casually. 'Any good?'
'Well, you see, I wanted to show it to some friends... And it just went off...'
'Amazing it didn't hit anyone in the gut. You've got real luck.'

The NKVD officer looked at his brother and blinked his pale lashes. 'Tell me, don't you even feel sorry for me?'
'I feel sorry for the table,' Boris replied.

Maksim, naturally, didn't miss the chance to brag to his friends:
'Now that's my Borya for you. The shotgun goes off and he's not worried about me, just some crummy table.'

It wasn't that Boris didn't love his brother. He just knew that if you treated Maksim gently, he'd climb onto your shoulders straight away.

The dog whip Maksim loved so much belonged to their German shepherd, Rex. Boris had personally chosen the pup from a service kennel near Moscow and brought it home inside his coat, complete with pedigree. The purebred pup grew into a huge, coal-black, remarkably clever dog.

In summer, Boris slept on the veranda while Rex sat chained nearby, guarding his master. He was a serious dog who gave no quarter to local hooligans, who more than once threatened to set dogs on him. The most vocal of these was Fedka the Cross-Eyed, ringleader of all the local louts.

One bright winter day, just after a snowfall, Boris stepped into the yard to clear the snow. At the doorstep lay Rex, legs stretched stiffly behind him in a death spasm. His nose rested on the steps and blood trickled from his coarse black nostrils. A long trail of blood led from the gate through the fresh snow to the porch. The loyal dog had crawled back home, but lacked the strength to climb the steps.

Boris bent down and touched the still-warm but lifeless body. Then he burst into the house, tore the shotgun from the wall and shouted furiously at Maksim as he worked the bolt:
'Come on! Rex has been poisoned! Where's Fedka the Cross-Eyed? That scum, I'll-' [102]

The younger brother charged around the snow like a madman, gun at the ready, hunting his beloved Rex's killer. The elder brother ran after him, trying in vain to wrest the gun from him.

Then boys from the street rushed over:
'Mister! Mister! Your Rex got hit by a car… We saw it ourselves. Fedka wasn't even around...'

Only then did Boris calm down and put the safety back on. That was the first time Maksim complained to their mother:
'Borya loves the dog like a human being. And me? I'm nothing to him.'

When it came to women, Maksim preferred married ones - what he called "little madams" - and even justified it:
'Double the victory, and no responsibility.' [451]

Boris, still too young to understand the implications, objected stubbornly:
'It's just theft.'
'That's the Law of Moses,' the NKVD officer smirked. 'Times have changed.'

True to form, Maksim married another man's wife. In Boris's eyes, Olga, Maksim's wife, had two faults: first, she hadn't finished an institute but only a milling college and second, she had left her first husband. [311, 659]

Yet it was Boris who had inadvertently caused the match.

Boris often went to parties at the house of his classmate Irina. Olga lived there as a lodger. At these parties the schoolchildren played the worn-out game of 'flirt with flowers', played forfeits with shy kisses and danced to the gramophone. Then they would knock at the lodger's door:
'Olga, come join us!'

She would step out, always wrapping herself in a large white angora shawl as if she were chilled. Her figure was nothing remarkable, but her face... It was the face of a Madonna, rare and unearthly in its beauty. She behaved like someone from another world and was always a little bored. She never laughed, only smiled faintly and even then to herself. She danced reluctantly, stiff as a wooden doll and when it was her turn to kiss in a forfeit game, she would purse her lips and turn away.

'Don't mind her,' Irina would whisper. 'She's a good girl, just a bit conceited.'

They lived nearby, not far from Petrovsky Park. One fine spring evening in that park, a student shot himself. He had sat calmly on a bench, lost in thought, then suddenly drew a Nagant revolver from his pocket and shot himself in the mouth. In another pocket they found a letter - addressed to the angel-faced Olga. It turned out he had been her fellow student at the milling college. People talked about it for a while, then forgot. There are always eccentrics. [54, 262, 309, 443, 445, 457, 489, 657]

But a few months later, in late autumn, another unpleasant story took place. Boris was summoned to the headmaster. 'You were friends with Zavalyshin?' asked the head. 'Yes, I went hunting with him.'
'Well - Zavalyshin shot himself... With that very shotgun. Did he ever say anything to you... Of that kind?'
'No, nothing at all.'
'All right... Go to his home on behalf of the Komsomol organisation. Take Ivan Strannik with you - he's his cousin. Do what you can to help.' [446, 454]

Cold November morning. The sound of soles clattering on frozen earth. A little house on Peschanaya Street. A mother broken by grief, and dark stains on the walls - traces of blood. Holes in the ceiling from that same buckshot they had recently cast together from chopped-up lead. Shapeless grey fragments clinging to the plaster - all that remained of his hunting companion's brain. [455]

That morning, instead of going to school, Zavalyshin had sat in an armchair, pressed the double-barrelled shotgun to his temple and pulled both triggers with his bare toe. The twin barrels, both loaded with buckshot, blew his head off completely. On the table lay his farewell note. Not to his mother, though he had been her only son, but to the angel-faced Olga. The police confiscated it, but everyone knew what it contained.

Zavalyshin had been a quiet, withdrawn lad, keeping apart from the other youths. He never stood out - not in lessons, not in sport. He became famous only after death. His suicide, something unheard of among schoolboys, provoked endless talk and still more puzzlement. Irina tried to defend her lodger:
'But Olga had nothing to do with it!'
'Then why did he write the note to her, and not someone else?' the pupils asked. 'I don't know. They only ever met at my parties. That's all.'
'And the student who shot himself in the park?'
'Nothing happened there either. She went to the cinema with him once, that's all. She isn't responsible for what he did afterwards.'

The schoolchildren shook their heads disapprovingly. 'Still, your Olga's a bit defective.'
'She's just got fish blood,' Irina objected. 'That's why she's always cold. She can't even sleep at night. To keep warm she crawls under the covers with me...'

Soon after, the beautiful Olga married a man she scarcely knew - as they say, the first one to come along. Malicious tongues whispered that she only wanted to rid herself of the gossip about the two suicides. Everyone has enemies and spiteful neighbours who seize on any excuse to chatter. To cap her misfortunes, straight after the wedding Olga's husband was called up for three years in the army, leaving her a grass widow. Now people pitied her. And then events unfolded thus. [456]

In the photographs Boris took at those parties, Maksim noticed Olga's angelic face and, sniffing like a connoisseur, said:
'Ahem, ahem... Who is she?'
'Oh, neither fish nor fowl.'
'Introduce me!'
'Too late. She's already married.'
'What, a married lady? All the better.'
'Depends how you see it. Two men have already shot themselves over her.'
'No matter. You just introduce me - the rest is my business.'

Maksim held a party for his friends, and Boris invited the grass widow, who was pining without her husband. Olga appeared, as ever wrapped in her white shawl and that evening Maksim lost his heart.

The brothers slept in adjoining rooms, and until then the younger often laughed at the elder's habit of talking in his sleep. But now Boris did not laugh. For some reason he even pitied his brother, bewitched as he was by Olga. Every night Maksim tossed restlessly and murmured anxiously:
'Olya... My dear... Olenka...' [459]

But fortune smiled on Maksim. In just a month, the beautiful Olga divorced her absent husband and married Maksim. At the wedding, Boris, as the one who had set their happiness in motion, sat in the place of honour opposite the bride. After the wedding, the elder brother left the family home and moved with his wife into a separate NKVD apartment in the new workers' buildings.

Soon they had a daughter. It was clear that Maksim was very happy, that he worshipped his young wife and was immensely proud of his child. He grew more solid, more serious and if he boasted now, it was only of his wife. He seldom visited the family home. Promoted at work, he was very busy, and spent all his free time with his own family.

Chapter 2 - Where No One Begets Nothing.

'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'
- Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

The outbuilding had two entrances: a front one from the balcony, and a back one from the kitchen. One winter night, Boris was woken by a persistent ringing at the front door. Wondering who could be pressing the bell in the middle of the night, he threw a fur coat over his bare shoulders and asked through the door:

'Who's there?'

'It's me... Open up...' came the voice of his elder brother. Still half-drunk with sleep, the younger man drew back the bolt, unhooked the chain, turned the mortice lock and opened the door. Outside: cold, snow and moonlight. Against the moonlit snow stood Maksim's dark figure in a long military greatcoat. His face was hidden and something large was pressed to his chest. Without stepping over the threshold, he held the bundle out to Boris. [461]

'Take it. Careful.'

Boris felt something soft, warm and stirring in his arms and realised it was a baby wrapped in a blanket.

'Give her to Mother,' Maksim said hoarsely. 'She knows what to do...' He turned and walked off through the moonlit snow. An engine revved in the street and Boris was left alone with the child in his arms.

Still bewildered, he woke his mother and handed her the crying infant. In the morning, Maksim rang, asking again that they look after his daughter, but said nothing more. That evening, the anxious mother went to his flat to find out what had happened, but the door was sealed with the red wax seals of the NKVD.

At first they thought Maksim had been arrested. But he called every day from work, asking after the child's health and to every question he answered only:

'Don't ask me anything...'

A week later he appeared at his parents' home. Unshaven, hollow-cheeked, with bloodshot eyes, in a crumpled uniform and unpolished boots, he looked like he had been sleeping in his clothes for days. He took off his greatcoat and silently walked to the bed where his little daughter lay.

'Maksim, tell us what happened,' his mother asked gently.

'Nothing...' he winced. 'I'll be living here now...'

'And what about Olga?'

'She... She won't be here...'

‘Why not? What happened between you?’

Sitting on the edge of the bed, staring at the child, Maksim seemed not to hear. Then he muttered in a hoarse, unfamiliar voice:

‘She took her own life... She’s already been buried... And don’t ask me anything else...’

He stood up wearily, walked with wooden steps into his room and closed the door behind him. In grief, some seek comfort from others; others withdraw. Sensing that Maksim shunned all sympathy, the family decided to leave him alone until he could bear his sorrow.

Each day, coming back from work, Maksim locked himself in his room. To reach his own room, Boris had to pass through his brother’s. Maksim would lie for hours on the divan, motionless as if paralysed, staring fixedly at one spot, lost in thought. Or he would sit unmoving at his desk, gazing with an unseeing stare into the dark night beyond the window, as though trying to grasp something incomprehensible.

Once, entering the room, Boris saw Maksim sitting at the table, staring into the empty window, his fingers toying with a small Browning pistol. He hadn’t even noticed his brother come in.

‘Maksim!’ the younger said quietly. The elder flinched, as if waking from a trance.

‘What is it?’

‘Hand over that toy, would you?’ Boris reached out. Maksim looked at the Browning in confusion, as if puzzled how it had ended up in his hand, and obediently handed it over. Boris slipped it into his pocket and nodded towards the kitchen.

‘Mother’s struggling to calm the child. Go and help her, will you?’

Maksim lowered his head and went to the kitchen.

The next day, Boris inspected the Browning out of caution and found that half the rounds in the magazine were missing. He sniffed the barrel, then removed the upper guard and checked the bore in the light - it was cloudy, with a whitish residue. As a hunter used to polishing his gun barrel to a shine after every hunt, he could tell this pistol had been fired recently. The toy Browning was a mute witness to some kind of drama. If Olga had shot herself, why were so many rounds missing?

After the death of his beautiful wife, Maksim behaved as though his soul had been removed. The only thing that still interested him in life was the child - a living memory of Olga. Often he would take the swaddled girl in his arms, press her to his chest and gaze at her for long stretches, as if searching for traces of his beloved wife in her features.

But water hollows stone, and time erodes human feeling. Recovering from the trauma and its aftermath, Maksim gradually began to return to himself. The first thing he did was bring home a stack of books. He no longer stared out the window, but sat frowning over pages, reading and rereading. Yet for some reason he hid these books from everyone, locking them

away in his desk when he left. He even wrapped their bindings in paper so no one could see their titles. Boris caught a glimpse only briefly: they were some kind of medical books.

And so he sat, evening after evening, day after day. Several months passed. Then one day Maksim raised a finger and murmured:

‘Hmm, this is interesting...’

‘What is?’ asked Boris from the next room.

‘Just a line... Two sentences...’

‘What?’

‘Nothing. Just something.’

‘Why the sudden interest in medicine?’

‘You wouldn’t understand. It’s a specialist subject... But now I’ll need to look elsewhere.’

Before working for the NKVD, when preparing for an academic career in history, Maksim had studied foreign languages seriously and read fairly well in English, German and French. Boris, though training to be an engineer, had also studied English and German in earnest.

Maksim began his new quest by hauling in a pile of books in English. These he no longer hid, but arranged carefully on a bookshelf. He pored over them more meticulously than he ever had his university history textbooks, marking passages in pencil and making notes. Again, evening after evening, day after day.

One day, tired of physics and mathematics, Boris looked over his brother’s shoulder and let out a long whistle. The book Maksim was studying so intently was titled *The Golden Bough*, with the subtitle: *A Study in Ancient Religious Cults and Magic. In Twelve Volumes*. [463]

‘Which volume are you reading?’ Boris asked with a smirk.

‘The tenth,’ Maksim replied calmly.

‘Planning to learn magic?’

‘No, just out of interest.’

‘But it’s all nonsense.’

‘No,’ said the NKVD officer, shaking his head. ‘It’s not nonsense, but dry history. Frazer is a famous anthropologist and *The Golden Bough* is the world’s leading academic work on the subject.’ [238, 617]

‘What subject?’

‘None of your business,’ the elder brother snapped. The pile of books on the shelf turned out indeed to be a multi-volume scholarly monograph. But about whom and what? There was everything: fire-worshippers at the dawn of civilisation, sun-priests, the ancient Egyptian cult of Osiris, bloodthirsty idols of ancient India and Mexico, the jolly pagan gods of Greece and Rome, Celtic druids, African witch-doctors, Eskimo shamans, and so on. And stamped at the top, like a seal of quality, was: *Lenin Library*. [464]

Then even stranger books began to appear in Maksim’s room. For example: *A Study of Black Magic and Pacts with the Devil, Including the Rites and Mysteries of Gothic Theurgy, Witchcraft and Infernal Necromancy* - a scholarly work by Arthur Edward Waite. Or: *Annals of Witchcraft, Demonology and Astrology in Western Europe*, published in Nuremberg in 1623. Alongside these, a yellowing treatise on *Magnetism, Spiritualism and Occult Sciences*. [186, 345, 380, 465, 704]

‘Why are you wasting time on this rubbish?’ Boris asked.

‘It’s not rubbish,’ his brother replied.

‘Then what is it?’

‘These are perfectly serious books written by serious scholars. They tried to solve certain riddles.’

‘Like how to make gold from lead?’

‘No, something else entirely.’

‘What, then?’

‘You wouldn’t understand,’ Maksim muttered, hunched over his work. ‘Now leave me alone.’

Then a whole stack of protocols appeared on the NKVD officer’s desk. But these were not files on counter-revolutionaries, rightist and leftist deviationists, or other enemies of Soviet power. These were mediaeval manuscripts in English with titles as long-winded as: *A Detailed and Truthful Record of the Highly Instructive Trial of Three Notorious Witches from the Village of Deptford, in the County of Essex, Before Crown Judge the Honourable Sir Francis Pemberton at Exeter Castle on Friday 2 June 1682, With First-Hand Examinations and Conclusions by the Renowned Physician Dr Henry Hearse, How These Harlots Confessed to Witchcraft and Were Condemned to Death According to the Statute and How This Was Recorded from the Testimonies of Respectable Witnesses. Printed in London in 1682*.

Or this one: *Report on Margery Hackett, Notorious Witch, Who Brought a Young Man to His Death, Scattering His Entrails and Bones and Who Was Executed at Tisbury on 19 February 1585.*

Or the following document: *Court Proceedings Against the Witch Mary Green and Her Daughter Ellen, Who Also Practised Sorcery, How They Confessed to the Premeditated*

Poisoning of Several Respectable People and Other Wicked Deeds as a Result of a Pact with the Devil and How They Were Executed in Hertford on 4 August 1606.

Leafing through these grim documents, Boris glanced with some concern at his brother, who was now deeply immersed in another sixteenth-century protocol.

‘Tell me, Maksim, what exactly are you working on?’

‘I’m just interested in certain things...’

‘What things?’

‘None of your concern.’

‘And why are they your concern?’

‘Because it’s my business.’

‘You haven’t gone off your rocker, have you?’ the younger one said, tapping his finger meaningfully against his temple.

The elder rubbed his inflamed eyes wearily and yawned.

‘No. Don’t worry about that. And stop pestering me.’

Month after month passed like this, with Maksim burrowing like a man possessed through his mediaeval treatises. After the witches, as if testing something, he returned to medical books, again hiding them from everyone. From time to time he would mutter under his breath:

‘Yes... That’s it... Only in different words...’

‘What?’ the younger asked through the half-open door.

‘Nothing,’ came the reply.

Then he plunged once more into the depths of the centuries, but not so far back this time. Now he was studying a series of books on criminology: *The History of Extraordinary Crimes of the Eighteenth Century*, *Vice and Crime in the Nineteenth Century*, and so on. He was hunting for something, like an artilleryman adjusting his range - overshoot, undershoot, then closer and closer. But Maksim’s target lay somewhere in the darkness of the Middle Ages. [373]

One evening, returning home from work and removing his greatcoat, he could no longer hold back and boasted:

‘Today I interrogated a very interesting person... You could tell he was just waiting for someone to ask the right question.’

Boris looked up from his geometry textbook.

‘Who?’

‘An old, very old prostitute. The oldest they could find. They searched all the prisons for her.’

‘Why did you want her? And someone that ancient?’

‘I needed to find something out. There are some things you’ll never read in books. But experienced prostitutes know them well and speak without embarrassment.’

‘Why do you need to know that?’

‘Because vice is always linked to crime.’

‘So what did she tell you?’

‘A lot of interesting things. Right now I’ve collected several criminal cases from the prisons that, in form, match the same types of crimes witches used to be accused of. I’m testing in practice what those old books claimed. You see? The results are fascinating. Fascinating indeed...’

‘And how exactly are you testing it?’

‘I ask about their parents, about their personal lives... They think I’ll reduce their sentence...’

‘But why do you need this?’

‘Just because,’ the officer said evasively.

After some months following Olga’s suicide, Maksim was unexpectedly granted special leave from the NKVD to work on a scientific dissertation. Somehow, the project was connected to the NKVD - he remained on the books, received his salary and showed no one the subject of his thesis. All day he sat at home behind a closed door, poring over bibliographical references.

He had now obtained permission to assemble his own collection of books needed for his research. The title pages bore the stamp: *NKVD Special Research Fund*. Through the NKVD he even ordered some books from abroad. It was a bizarre collection on topics seemingly unrelated to each other: a three-volume work by Henry Lea, *A History of the Mediaeval Inquisition*, next to the libretto of Puccini’s opera *Turandot*; Plato’s philosophical *Dialogues*, and alongside them again some yellowing treatises on unclean spirits. In all these books Maksim marked certain passages with red pencil; others, evidently of special importance, he tagged with colour-coded slips bearing ciphered notes, while simultaneously writing observations in a thick blue folder he always kept locked in his desk. [467, 479]

In this collection, Boris found H. Rider Haggard’s novel *Montezuma’s Daughter*, which he had once read before his quarrel with Maksim. Beside it stood *She*, by the same author, about a mysterious queen in the heart of Africa. Seeing both volumes full of red pencil marks, Boris asked:

‘What do you need this for?’

‘It was necessary...’

‘But it’s children’s stuff!’

‘Ha, that’s what you think.’

‘Then who’s it for?’

‘For... For those who regress into childhood.’

‘What’s the difference?’

‘A big one. When someone regresses into childhood, it means the end of the cycle, the approach of death. Got it?’

‘I don’t get anything.’

Maksim waved a hand.

‘Then go do your own thing and stop meddling.’

In mid-summer, when wolfberries blossomed on the rubbish heap, Maksim suddenly regressed into childhood himself. Wearing polished chrome boots, he clambered into the weed-choked dump, gathered some kind of herbs and began drying them in the oven. Then he sat at his desk, piled with idiotic books, shut all the doors and windows, placed the dried herbs in a tin can from some preserves and set it on a lit spirit burner. Blue smoke curled up from the tin and the NKVD officer sat inhaling the incense of the rubbish heap.

‘Have you gone completely mad?’ asked Boris.

‘Mmm...’

‘What are you sniffing?’

‘Belladonna...’ [468]

‘Ugh! You’ll get a headache from that.’

‘Doesn’t matter. You’re not going anywhere right now, are you?’

‘No.’

‘Then sit nearby just in case. Watch what happens to me. But don’t breathe the smoke. It’s still a poison...’

‘Fine. But first tell me, why are you doing this?’

‘I need to test something.’ Without looking up from his odd experiment, he nodded towards some open books. ‘Read those.’

On the yellowed pages, Maksim had underlined descriptions of how witches brewed various potions from belladonna. Beside that: a scene from a witches' sabbath, where gleeful hags burned belladonna leaves and, revelling in the poisonous stench, sang and danced round the fire.

To start with, Maksim decided to test the effects of belladonna smoke on himself - until he was dizzy and collapsed on the bed. The next day, he held his head, cursed all witches and unclean powers, yet diligently wrote down his sensations in the blue folder. Later potions he no longer tested on himself, but on inmate subjects.

'These are all just different drugs,' he muttered. 'Some even like them. Belladonna, hashish, marijuana.'

Maksim's scientific work was taking ever more extraordinary forms. He obtained special authorisation and, with the help of a designated team, began to exhume abandoned graves in old Moscow cemeteries. But not just any graves - only those that, for some reason, interested him. From each such grave, he would take the tibia of the skeleton and attach a label to it. From the gravestone he copied onto the label the name, surname, age and date of death of the subject corpse. These bones were then sent to an NKVD chemical laboratory. [472]

Boris sat at his bullet-holed desk with broken legs, cramming mathematical formulas. At the neighbouring window, separated only by the habitually half-open door, his elder brother sat at his desk like a sorcerer, immersed in his dark affairs. Perhaps because Boris had become an involuntary witness to these activities, or perhaps because Maksim needed someone to share his thoughts with, Boris remained the only one whom Maksim ever slightly let in on his work.

'Hey you, gravedigger,' the younger brother mocked. 'What do you need skeletons for?'

'I'm simply testing an old folk expression - "white bone and blue blood",' the elder replied coolly. [196]

'And how are you testing it?'

'Literally. I've exhumed a number of graves of hereditary aristocracy, and just as many of commoners. I took bones from both groups of the same age, under otherwise equal conditions and compared them.'

'Well, what did you find?'

'Very curious results. Compared with commoners, the hereditary aristocracy really do have white bone. And chemical analysis shows a significant difference. A disruption in the phosphorus-calcium balance.'

'And what does that prove?'

'Apparently, over centuries, people noticed this difference - perhaps while examining bones on abandoned battlefields. That's where the phrase "white bone and blue blood" came from.'

'But why do you need this?'

‘It’s necessary,’ the NKVD officer replied tersely.

These experiments now absorbed Maksim so completely that he even lost interest in his baby daughter. More than that, he seemed to avoid seeing her, as though this living reminder of his dead, beautiful wife had now become unpleasant to him. He no longer took her in his arms, only occasionally stopping at her cot and gazing at her thoughtfully, as if studying something even there. Then he would walk away in silence and lock himself in his room.

Now Maksim’s burning soul belonged entirely to his mysterious scientific project. He then unexpectedly announced that he was sending the child to Olga’s parents, who lived in Berezovka, a dacha settlement not far from Moscow. [42, 470, 482]

‘Why are you doing this, Maksim?’ his mother asked in surprise.

‘It’s for the best,’ he replied curtly, avoiding eye contact.

‘Leave her with us,’ the father intervened.

‘No. I’m taking her to Berezovka tomorrow.’

‘But why?’

The elder brother frowned and repeated firmly:

‘It’s for the best.’

Chapter 3. The Philosopher's Stone

Nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest;
neither is any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Mark 4:22

The next item on the programme was a scientific expedition, in which Maksim took part. Not to the Crimea or the Caucasus, but to the most godforsaken corners of Northern Siberia and the Arctic Circle. The expedition was organised by the NKVD. A few other scientists participated as well, each with their own private assignments, but Maksim was in charge. The polar aviation division of the NKVD provided aircraft, but to reach the final destinations they had to rely on local guides and reindeer sledges. Accompanied by his scientific assistants, Maksim surveyed remote Arctic encampments, cut off from the world and inaccessible even to Soviet power, inhabited by nomads, Samoyeds and Tunguses, who lived in conditions close to primitive. [319]

As a souvenir from this expedition, he brought back to Moscow a beaded reindeer parka, soft Samoyed boots and a a collection of artefacts: an old native drum painted in bright colours with copper jingles, grotesque Samoyed idols carved from dark wood, a bronze pectoral plate inscribed with mysterious symbols - the insignia of a shaman's authority - and a whole heap of heavy necklaces and bracelets made of some kind of bone.

A layer of dark grime had hardened over the grinning faces of the idols. Yet it was the dirtiest, oldest and most misshapen of them that Maksim handled with the greatest care and treated with visible respect.

'You might at least wash it,' Boris suggested.

'No. That's the whole point of it.'

'Why?'

'It's not grime, but dried blood. During sacrificial rites they smear these gods with blood.'

'What kind - reindeer?'

'Yes, nowadays it's reindeer blood. But this idol is several centuries old and chemical analysis showed it used to be smeared with human blood.'

'When was that?'

'Roughly the same period when witches and sorcerers were being burned in Western Europe. And one old shaman told me something interesting, which he'd heard from his ancestors. It turns out that the sacrificial victim was chosen by the shaman and exhibited the same distinctive traits used by the medieval Inquisition to identify witches. Samoyed shamans had never heard of the Inquisition, but they did exactly the same thing. Is that not fascinating?'

'Ah yes, the Dark Ages,' Boris said dismissively, picking up a native necklace.

‘They weren’t so dark, if you know what was going on,’ replied the authorised representative of the Soviet Inquisition, squinting sardonically. ‘And that necklace, by the way, is made from human bones too.’

The schoolboy flung the strange ornament away with disgust.

‘Ugh, I’ll have to wash my hands now.’

Maksim explained calmly:

‘That was the chief regalia of a famous shaman - the bones of his own great-great-grandmother, who was also a shamaness. The craft of sorcery is often passed down the generations among them. It’s believed the bones retain magical power. And from a certain perspective, they really do.’

‘What kind of truth is that?’

‘A sorcerous kind,’ said Maksim, winking at no one in particular. ‘When I took those bones from him, the shaman got so angry that he called down the curse of all his ancestors upon me.’

‘Well, if you believe in witchcraft, you’d better watch out.’

‘No. Because I know that curse. When I had a heart-to-heart with the shaman, he realised I was a more powerful sorcerer than him. He even held a special ceremony in my honour - a rite of invocation for the “wise red shaman”. My professors sat around the fire as witnesses, blinking in confusion. That’s where I observed shamanic dancing with the drum and fits of convulsion. Incidentally, such fits are often mentioned in the records of the Inquisition.’

‘Epilepsy, is it?’

‘No, according to medieval terminology - demonic possession… Later I bartered with him for the bones of all his other ancestors as well.’ Maksim nodded towards the pile of necklaces.

‘Why did you want them?’

‘To verify something... With a spectroscope,’ the elder brother dodged the question again. ‘You know, the Tunguses have an unusual custom. They lavish a passing traveller with hospitality and then send him to bed with the host’s wife. If he refuses, the husband takes it as a grave insult - he might even kill him for it.’ [34, 478]

‘And did you... Make use of these ladies?’

‘No. To please a guest, the Tungus women clean themselves not with water but with fish oil. Imagine the stench.’

‘Putting your own wife in bed with a stranger - what a quaint custom.’

‘Not quaint, very clever.’

‘And what if there’s a child?’

‘That’s exactly what they want.’

‘Why?’

‘Because in those wild parts, a stranger passes through only once every three years.’

‘So what?’

‘So they deliberately mix in new blood. That’s the idea! And it’s what modern genetics recommends. The Tunguses reached it through lived experience.’

‘That’s a bit much...’ the schoolboy muttered sceptically. The NKVD officer, recognised by the shaman as a fellow practitioner, smiled cryptically. [416]

‘It was the shamans who instituted this peculiar custom - guided by grandmother’s bones... You see?’

But Boris did not see. Nor was he interested in the mysteries of Siberian shamanism, with exams in the history of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) fast approaching.

Yet in this chaos there was an unmistakable system, known only to himself. Soon after the Siberian shaman expedition, Boris spotted on his brother’s desk an obscure book by a psychiatrist not especially popular in the Soviet Union: Totem and Taboo: Resemblances Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics by Freud. Again, it bore the NKVD stamp and red pencil annotations.

After Freud, Maksim returned to books on unclean spirits, increasingly focusing on writings by Catholic priests and Church Fathers. Discovering that most of the material he sought was written in Latin, he took up the language and soon knew it well enough to read with a dictionary. Now, adorning his desk were such primary sources on demonology as: Acontius, *Sferatagemata Satanae* (1565); Nicolas Jacquerius, *Flagellum Daemonum Fascinariorum* (1458); Joannes Vinetus, *Tractatus contra daemonum inuocatores* (1450); and others in the same vein. [26]

Studying the medieval treatise *Malleus Maleficarum*, published by a certain Sprenger in 1496 in Nuremberg, he underlined passages heavily in red pencil, nodded in approval and murmured assent: [21, 27, 33, 477]

‘Yes, precisely so... Quite right, Comrade Inquisitor! Borya, do you know what *Malleus Maleficarum* means in Latin? “Hammer of the Witches” - a manual for breaking witches.’

‘You obscurantist, don’t distract me - I’m revising trigonometry,’ came the reply from the next room. [141, 556]

Maksim now studied the directives of medieval hunters of the unclean with more reverence than he had once accorded the primary texts of Marxism-Leninism. At bedtime, to relax and unwind, he would pick up a volume of Baudelaire’s *The Flowers of Evil*, but even there he would scrawl notes and mutter sarcastic remarks:

‘Aha, wagging his tail too... Obvious enough... So, so and this quarter-blood of his, Lord have mercy, has the black mark on her breast...’

‘Who are you tugging by the tail?’ Boris would call through the door.

‘The devil,’ Maksim would reply.

His younger brother teased him:

‘When you catch him, show me.’

‘Not only will I catch him,’ the elder retorted placidly, ‘I’ll ride him too.’

He worked long into the night, often until morning, at his desk piled high with all manner of infernal detritus. He rose late, bleary-eyed, swallowed breakfast indifferently and resumed his labours - which by now had become the sole content of his life. When Boris once asked why he worked at night, Maksim smirked crookedly:

‘It’s easier that way... I keep the same shift as the devils...’

Almost a year had passed since poor Olga’s suicide. In all that time, Maksim had not uttered his wife’s name, never spoke of the circumstances of her death, nor said where she was buried. And yet the younger brother sometimes noticed how, toward dawn, Maksim tossed restlessly in his sleep and whispered into the pillow through clenched teeth:

‘Olya... I loved you so much... Olenka... Surely there was another way...’

So he had not forgotten her. The wound in his heart had not healed. Sometimes Boris suspected that Maksim’s obsession with medieval alchemy was somehow bound up with Olga’s death. In his brother’s disjointed utterances there were often dark hints at secrets of life and death. Could it be that this NKVD official, in seeking oblivion, was trying to recover lost happiness in the depths of the ages, like Doctor Faustus seeking the philosopher’s stone, the source of life and death? Or perhaps, with the obstinacy of a madman, he was searching for some mythical means of bringing his beloved back to life?

Why had Maksim suddenly taken to studying medieval mysticism, treatises on spiritualism, mediums and communication with the other world with such deadly seriousness? Was he planning to conjure the disembodied spirit of his dead, beautiful wife? At times Boris thought his brother suffered from a delusion, that he had simply lost his mind from grief. But otherwise Maksim behaved quite normally. And if he was mad, why did the NKVD subsidise his eccentric work, assign professors to assist him, even equip a special expedition to the shamans?

What did the analysis of dried blood from long-dead human sacrifices have to do with spectrograms of shamanic bones?

In the physics lab, Boris himself had used the spectroscope to analyse metallic alloys. By studying the spectrogram of light from a star invisible to the naked eye and hundreds of light years from Earth, one could determine the precise chemical composition of that star. But what could one possibly learn from the ancient bones of a shaman’s great-great-grandmother?

The next item on the agenda for the investigator of unclean forces was Orthodox theology, or more precisely, theology as such. He instructed his assistants to procure for him, even if from the depths of the earth, the best theologian still alive in the Soviet Union. Siberia, after all, was a warehouse of all manner of rarities. Somewhere, not far from the shamans, in a Siberian labour camp, they located a former member of the Holy Synod and professor of theology at the Higher Theological Academy - a frail old man living out his final days in peace as an orderly at the camp's medical point. He was suddenly washed, dressed, put on a plane and brought to Moscow. [171, 208]

Finding himself on Lubyanka, the old man expected nothing good. He was led to a lean NKVD officer with slender, nervous hands and the eyes of a fanatic staring into the distance. The investigator began by politely apologising for the surroundings in which they had to converse. On the desk lay a thick stack of papers: the interrogation records to which the priest had been subjected during his long years of ordeal in prisons and camps. Then began an extraordinary interrogation. Pencil in hand, the thin officer flipped through the records, questioning the prisoner closely about all the investigators who had interrogated him in the past: how they had behaved during questioning, whether they had beaten him, tortured him, abused or humiliated him, either physically or spiritually and in what manner exactly. Suddenly he raised his pencil, wrote down the name of one of the investigators on a slip of paper and said quietly:

'There is a devil in this man. Do you agree with me, Professor?'

The old man lowered his gaze sadly and said nothing.

'Very well. I understand your position,' the officer nodded. 'Let's continue.'

He checked a few more folders, stopped at one and again began questioning in detail about the interrogation methods used by that investigator, going into the most minute and seemingly insignificant details. Then he looked at his interlocutor.

'There's nothing about this in the records. But it happened, didn't it? And, as you can see, I know about it! What do you think, Professor?'

The old man winced in pain.

'I'd rather not remember...'

'Then I will say what you prefer not to: that man too carries the devil. Or, more precisely, a blend of Satan and Antichrist.' The officer with the fanatic's eyes leaned back in his chair. 'I tell you all this so that you understand what interests me, from what perspective, and so that you can help me make sense of it.'

The old man blinked, his eyes lighting up with a spark of astonishment mingled with disbelief.

'This is most extraordinary... I don't understand what you want this for...'

The officer's long fingers tapped the table.

‘Professor, the theologian’s duty is to interpret the word of God for those who seek it. That is precisely what I ask of you: to explain to me certain passages of Holy Scripture...’

‘Yes, but Scripture speaks only in allegory...’

‘Which is why I want you to explain what lies behind the allegory,’ the officer repeated calmly.

What he wanted was the biblical interpretation of God and the devil, every passage of the Bible that mentioned the devil and his disputes with God. What is the devil? Why is he called the prince of this world? The prince of darkness? A fallen angel? An unclean spirit? The god of this age? The angel of death? A liar and the father of lies? Why is he Nobody and Nothing? And why does that Nothing negate? The officer even took into account technical nuances such as the peculiarities of the ancient languages in which the books of the Covenant had been written, which lacked many of the concepts familiar to us today.

To his utmost astonishment, the theology professor discovered in this lean NKVD officer an exemplary student, possessing excellent prior knowledge, deep erudition, and, most importantly, a sincere desire to get to the heart of the subject. Only one thing troubled him: the interests of this new convert to Orthodoxy appeared somewhat one-sided. When the professor waxed eloquent on the nature of God, the pupil would politely interrupt:

‘Forgive me, Professor. I am interested in God only as the antithesis of the devil. Could we stay closer to the topic...’

The old man would shake his grey beard reproachfully, raise his hands to the ceiling and gently admonish him:

‘Young man, the spirit of the devil is the negation of the divine spirit. Without knowing what one is to negate, without knowing the beginning, you cannot understand the end.’

‘Yes, you are right,’ the officer would agree, stifling a yawn. ‘So, the spirit is the vector of a thinking substance. Please continue.’

As a result, a large black leather-bound Bible appeared on Maksim’s shelf, bristling with coloured bookmarks and annotations. When the theological consultations ended, the professor was not sent back to Siberia but released. He understood that this was his payment for having tutored so unusual a pupil.

Having finished with sinners, Maksim turned to the righteous. He studied the origins of monastic orders, the contemporary accounts of the trial of Joan of Arc and the Lives of the Saints. Yet for some reason, at bedtime he would reread Flaubert’s *Salammbô*, a novel from his youth about the mysterious priestess of the moon goddess Tanit.

At the same time, he pored no less attentively over cheap little paperbacks with no author listed, such as *The Diary of Sister Angelica*, which purported to reveal titillating secrets from life behind the convent wall. After this, he would return to papal edicts on witch-hunting and grumble approvingly:

‘That old chap, the Pope, was a clever one... So sinners had a choice - the stake or the monastery... That’s fairly liberal, really...’

‘What’s that?’ Boris would call from behind the door, receiving the usual answer:

‘You wouldn’t understand, you fool.’

His fascination with the Lives of the Saints did not prevent Maksim from digging up monastic graveyards. With the remains of the righteous he conducted the same series of experiments as with the bleached bones of the old aristocracy. After receiving the lab results, he sat at his desk, calculating balances. His younger brother, looking up from a biology textbook and trying to amuse himself, joked:

‘Hey, stargazer, what do you need relics for now?’

The elder, as befitted a master of forbidden knowledge, gave a vague and evasive answer:

‘Cast the devil out the front door, and he’ll come back through the window - in the guise of a saint. Freud called it sublimation. But you tell me - why do people enter monasteries?’

‘Because they want to, I suppose.’

‘But monastic life is hard. Vows. Fasting. Discipline. So why do people choose it?’

‘I don’t know,’ Boris said. ‘Do you?’

The Commissioner for Unclean Affairs paused, weighing his words:

‘It’s their conscience speaking. Their higher conscience. The spiritual striving of true saints is in overcoming the sinful flesh, resisting the devil’s temptations and submitting to God. That is a great achievement.’

He spoke so earnestly that Boris barely held back laughter.

‘So has the devil tempted you?’

‘No. The devil tempts only sinful flesh.’

‘But we’re all sinners.’

‘Ah no... Some things must not be understood metaphorically, but quite literally, as they once were. That’s the whole secret.’

‘How so?’

‘It’s like this: in the tenth century, during the baptism of Rus’, the Russian word for “sin” came from the word “Greek”.’

‘What have the Greeks got to do with it?’

‘Because by the time Hellenic civilisation was collapsing, they were pagans. Got it?’

‘Not really,’ the younger admitted. So the elder brother smirked crookedly.

‘Do you know where the word “pagan” comes from?’

‘Where?’

‘From the word “tongue” - “lingus”,’ he said, citing Freud and muttered some further word usually found in risqué French anecdotes. ‘It’s one of the sins the Greeks practised. That’s all that remains of Ancient Greece - a memory.’

Behind Maksim’s cryptic language and insinuations, something unmistakably clear occasionally flickered - something he knew but never fully revealed. This was especially odd, since he normally liked to flaunt his knowledge. If he kept silent, it meant he had a serious reason to do so. One day, tired of Boris’s jibes, he said reluctantly:

‘Have you heard of the Trojan War? Well, archaeologists searched for the remains of Troy for years and couldn’t find them. Then one amateur archaeologist had a simple idea: to use Homer’s *Iliad* as a guide for the excavations. And what do you think? That’s how he found the ruins of burned Troy! There are cities mentioned in the Bible, long vanished without trace. People dug in barren deserts, guided by the Bible - and they found them. -’ He stretched wearily, like an archaeologist after a long dig. ‘So I too have found some forgotten truths in old books.’

Instead of Troy, Maksim soon outfitted a second scientific expedition - to the Volga German Republic, to the German colonies around Odessa dating from the time of Catherine II and finally to wild auls hidden in the Caucasus Mountains. What he sought there, following the trail of Prometheus, no one knows.

At that point, the investigator of unclean forces drew a line. After his mysterious research project, he defended his dissertation. When Boris, partly out of politeness and partly out of curiosity, expressed a desire to attend the defence, Maksim shook his head:

‘No. It’s a special project. The defence is closed.’

A candidate’s dissertation normally runs to about three hundred pages. Maksim, however, submitted three thick volumes, with the bibliography alone exceeding fifty pages. And instead of being awarded the degree of Candidate of Sciences, in what was described as an exceptional case granted only for truly extraordinary achievements, he was immediately granted the highest academic title: Doctor of Social Sciences and Philosophy.

Two things are usually required for major discoveries. The first is an extreme, superhuman concentration on the subject. The second is the ability to discern a pattern among particulars and to draw practical conclusions from it. [131]

The death of his beloved had such an effect on Maksim, gave him such a push, so sharply focused him on a purpose known only to himself, that he forgot everything else in the world for its sake. In search of answers, he sifted through every detail, delved into the entire treasury of human thought from the Bible to Freud, the full history of human civilisation from

primitive Tunguses and their shamans to the mortal remains of a refined aristocracy - and he found some pattern. Something important. Otherwise, he would not have been awarded his doctorate so readily.

Maksim let slip that his work had attracted the interest of Stalin himself. But what practical conclusion did the doctor of sociology draw for the Soviet authorities from his study of medieval alchemy? Had he learned to make gold from lead? Had he found the philosopher's stone? Or had he discovered the secret of materialising spirits? After all, newspapers had once reported that Adolf Hitler too had funded similarly strange ventures, with scientists investigating telepathy, spiritualism and parapsychology.

'So, Max, what did you discover?' Boris asked.

'The formula of the devil,' Maksim replied, without even cracking a smile.

In any case, from that moment on, Dr Rudnev began a dizzying career, one he had never dared to imagine. Alongside his doctoral diploma, he received the rank of colonel in the NKVD. Soon afterwards, he was awarded his first decoration - not some minor honour, but the Order of Lenin itself, the highest award of the Soviet Union. *Pravda* reported it briefly: '...for fulfilling special assignments of the Party and government.' Maksim now advanced in great strides. Most astonishing of all was the total indifference with which he treated all these honours. [474]

As a professor of sociology, Maksim now directed a highly secretive NKVD Scientific Research Institute, where every researcher's white lab coat revealed, like a devil's tail, the crimson piping of the NKVD beneath. Simultaneously, Maksim was head of a certain operational division within the NKVD, where the theoretical work of the institute found its practical application.

'What kind of department is this?' Boris asked.

'The Thirteenth,' Maksim replied.

'And what does it deal with?'

'With matters of unclean forces. That's why it's the thirteenth.'

'Ah, you're talking nonsense.'

Maksim pulled out an official form from his desk. It clearly read: '13th Department, Main Directorate of the NKVD of the USSR.' Boris waved dismissively and went back to his own affairs. There was no use trying to get a straight answer from Maksim anyway.

Then... Then the doctor, professor and colonel of the NKVD suddenly began to drink heavily. Though he had never been known to abuse alcohol before, now he drank like the worst kind of alcoholic - alone. He would lock himself in his room, drink himself into a stupor and begin talking to himself. Or perhaps he was conversing with spirits he had read about in his medieval treatises on unclean forces?

While studying alchemy, Maksim had also taken to collecting objects related to that arcane craft. At some point he acquired an original German-made goblet from the days when witches were hunted in Germany, fashioned from fine, hand-painted matte porcelain. It was an exquisite imitation of a human skull. The German artisan had achieved such lifelike resemblance that the object was genuinely unpleasant to touch. Maksim, however, sat and drank vodka from it.

One day, passing by on his way to his room, Boris reproached him:

‘Max, why do you drink?’

‘Why?’ The colonel slowly raised his head and looked at his brother with bloodshot eyes. ‘I need to talk...’

‘To whom?’

‘To that which even the gods cannot restore... To my own past... To which I owe my present...’

‘Why do you need that?’

‘Why?... To unburden my soul... But you, godless man, wouldn’t understand...’

‘Why not go fishing on Sunday instead?’ the godless one suggested.

‘Resurrection... That is the reincarnation of the soul... The soul’s transformation through suffering, as Dostoevsky said.’ A grim smile crept across Maksim’s lips. ‘No, I’m fishing for a different catch now...’

‘What, torturing people? You’re a piece of work...’ There was dislike in the younger brother’s voice. The elder frowned:

‘You understand nothing... And you never will...’

‘It’s plain to see. That’s why you’ve taken to drink.’

‘It only looks like they’re people... But in reality they are not people...’

‘Then who are they?’

‘Better not ask, Bobka.’ The colonel grimaced as if nauseated. ‘And even if I did tell you... You wouldn’t believe it... And for heaven’s sake, never tell anyone...’

‘You wouldn’t say anything sensible anyway,’ the younger agreed.

The elder swayed on his chair and muttered to himself:

‘Yes, quite right... You, Bobka, are a happy animal, a mammal, a homo sapiens... Of the mesomorphic type... And yet, though you understand nothing... It is you I ought to thank.’

‘For what?’

‘For this!’ Maksim jabbed a finger at his chest, where the Order of Lenin gleamed. ‘Yes, for this very thing... There you go, I’m telling you and you don’t understand...’

He slumped forward, resting his elbows heavily on the table and took a swig of vodka from his repellent goblet.

‘Fine, I’ll tell you a secret... Want to hear it?’

‘You’d be better off drinking less, or your nose will turn red.’

‘I’m serious... And you, fool, laugh... It’s a big secret... A state secret...’ The colonel lowered his voice, as if afraid someone might be listening. ‘So listen... You, unbeliever, think devils don’t exist... But I’m telling you - they do!’

‘All drunkards say that. When they’re deep in the bottle, they start seeing little devils.’

‘Idiot,’ said the state security colonel without malice. ‘Devils exist... And werewolves and forest spirits too... And witches and warlocks - they’re everywhere... I deal with them every day...’

‘Of course - if you drink every day,’ the younger replied sceptically.

‘Don’t believe me?’ The elder stood unsteadily, took a thick book from the shelf, bristling with multicoloured bookmarks, found the place he wanted and began to read slowly and solemnly:

‘... Witches and warlocks are the spawn of evil, a social contagion and parasites, adherents of loathsome and indecent doctrines, partisans of poison, blackmail and other creeping crimes... Witches and warlocks sow discord, jealousy, quarrels and heartbreak... Their harmful activity ranges from minor domestic troubles and interpersonal conflicts, individually perhaps trivial but collectively extremely unpleasant and agonising, to the gravest of crimes... Loss of property, sudden illness, gnawing death and finally-’ Here the NKVD colonel, specialist in unclean forces, raised his finger meaningfully. ‘Mark this - “and finally, to the clash of nations, anarchy and red revolution, since witchcraft has always been and always will be a political factor... Witches and warlocks are therefore a constant danger to any ordered society.” Do you know who said that?’

‘Who?’

‘Pope Innocent the Eighth himself!’ the Soviet doctor of sociology declared with reverence, like a pupil speaking of his teacher. ‘It’s written in his famous bull of 1484! And I would sign my name to every word!’ [23]

‘People write all kinds of nonsense,’ Boris replied. ‘Paper’s patient.’

‘No, it’s not nonsense at all.’ Maksim fondly stroked the book’s binding. ‘This is *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology* by Montague Summers... From the strictly academic series *The History of Civilisation*... Summers was a theologian, and the book was published in

London in 1926... So it's a serious and modern work... You just have to understand what's meant by all of it...'

'You obscurantist,' said Boris. 'What on earth did they give you a doctorate for?'

'For this very thing... Though from the perspective of dialectical materialism...'

'Then the examining committee must have been drunk too?'

'There was no committee,' said the pupil of Pope Innocent the Eighth, replacing the book on the shelf. 'I was granted my doctorate personally, by Comrade Stalin himself!'

'You're lying,' the younger replied.

The elder took a large gulp from his repulsive skull-cup, jerked his head and slumped onto the table, staring blankly into the goblet as though trying to see something at the bottom of a human skull.

'It's very simple... I broke my dissertation into several independent parts - one on history, one on anthropology, one on psychology and a few other specialised topics... Each part was reviewed by the leading experts in its field in the Soviet Union... Each part on its own doesn't say anything too remarkable... But put them all together and you get what Pope Innocent said: the unclean force as a political factor... All verified and signed by academicians, but how to put it all together - that I alone know... Well, me and Comrade Satan...' [22, 87, 513]

'So what good is it that you know?'

'What do you mean, what good? These devils are a social contagion, parasites... A threat to any ordered society... And that makes it an NKVD matter...'

The state security colonel perked up and began shifting excitedly on his chair, as if he were riding atop Satan himself.

'I said to Stalin: "Look, Comrade Stalin, this is the source of anarchy and re-volu-tion..." He didn't believe me. So I took my materials, arranged them just so - and proved, based on documented facts, confirmed by academicians, how this unclean force contributed first to the anarchy under the Tsar, then took part in the October Socialist Revolution... All precise, with names, with surnames...'

'And with addresses too?' Boris inserted mockingly.

'Of course,' continued the disciple of Pope Innocent, carried away. 'Stalin was furious at first, but I said to him: "One moment, Comrade Stalin... It all hinges on one word... This is a threat to any ordered society... Do you understand - any? So if you regard Soviet power as an ordered society, then this same unclean force will now start a revolution against you - that is, a counter-revolution..." And that made him pause to think...'

Maksim took another swig from his vodka vessel and hiccupped.

‘After that Stalin appointed me... Hic... Special commissioner for unclean affairs... Hic... Within the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs... Hic... Across the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics... Got it?’ Sitting astride the chair, he shook a finger warningly. ‘But look here, Bobka - don’t you tell anyone... This is a state secret... And now, you know what?... I can’t seem to get up from the chair... Put me to bed and take off my boots...’ [31]

‘Not a chance.’

‘Why not?’

‘Since you drank yourself to the devils, let them take off your boots.’

Boris decided privately that his brother had finally gone mad. However, Maksim’s apparent insanity only seemed to advance his career. Before long, he was promoted to the rank of State Security Commissar 3rd Class, equivalent to a major general in the NKVD.

Chapter 4. The Prince and the Commissar

For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Luke 10:24

Shortly after Doctor of Social Sciences Maksim Rudnev was appointed Stalin's Special Commissioner for Unclean Affairs, the assassination of Kirov took place in Leningrad. Kirov was the second most powerful man in the Party after Stalin. He was killed by a young Communist named Nikolaev.

It was a cold winter morning. The radio played Chopin's funeral marches on a loop. Maksim sat at his desk, drinking vodka instead of tea, leafing through Nikolaev's personal file and muttering:

'Aha - equine foot... Just like Byron... We know all about these Byronic types... Heroes of our time... Tamerlane, Talleyrand, Martov the Menshevik leader, Rosa Luxemburg, Batka Makhno, Goebbels... All these limping misfits and crippled mentors in Dostoevsky...' [226]

Boris was in the next room, studying Party history. He cracked the door open and asked:

'Oi, sorcerer - what are you mumbling about in there?'

'What... What...' Maksim muttered. 'Besides, he had epilepsy... And his wife was much older than him... But even she left him... A textbook legionnaire!'

Maksim's desk was old and unremarkable. But now it bore three telephones: a white one for ordinary conversations, a red one with a direct line to the Kremlin and a black one - a special line to the 13th Department of the NKVD. [2, 485, 530, 583]

'Well then... All clear.' He reached for the black phone. 'That's why they say - the limping devil... Or the cross-eyed devil...'

Sipping his vodka, the Doctor of Social Sciences began dictating down the line an order to register, under special surveillance by the 13th Department of the NKVD, all limping and cross-eyed individuals in the Soviet Union - starting with Party members. But only those born that way.

Kirov's assassination served as a signal of sorts - it marked the beginning of the Great Purge. At first, portraits of famous people disappeared from the walls - heroes of the revolution, veteran Bolsheviks, yesterday's Party and government leaders. Then their names started appearing in newspapers as enemies of the people, traitors, saboteurs and foreign spies. After that, these former heroes were sent down the conveyor belt of death in the NKVD cellars. [88]

State Security Commissar Rudnev took up a Stakhanovite shift: he worked two shifts a day, sixteen hours and often spent the night at the office. When he did come home, he reeked of vodka. At dinner, he sat in silence, avoiding eye contact. [414, 738]

Leafing through *Izvestia*, which carried a report on another trial of enemies of the people, Father Rudnev grumbled disapprovingly:

‘It’s the devil’s own business...’

‘Yes, the devil knows what he’s doing,’ muttered the State Security Commissar, eyes fixed on his plate. ‘There’s an old tale: the devil promises power and fame, but you have to sign a little contract... Well, now the devil’s come to collect his due... And I’m balancing the books.’

‘But those revolutionaries fought for a better future,’ said the father.

‘History has shown many times over that the paradise promised by revolutionaries is always a lost paradise,’ replied the commissar. ‘And the road to hell is paved with fine promises. The revolutionaries are the first to walk it.’

‘But these trials are clearly rigged!’

‘Are they though...? They started a fratricidal civil war... They brought ruin, famine and pestilence upon Russia... Do you know it cost more Russian lives than the entire world war? Well then, the time has come to settle the bill.’

Meanwhile, the purges were taking increasingly surreal turns. At a show trial attended by the international press, Kremlin doctors led by Dr Levin confessed in detail to slowly poisoning their patients. They had been encouraged in this by the chief guardian of the Kremlin - none other than NKVD head Yagoda. The ideological masterminds behind the poisonings were the quiet, idealistic types of Lenin’s old guard - renowned humanitarians and lovers of liberty. From the courtroom, these former heroes of the revolution were marched straight to the NKVD slaughterhouse. It was as if some blood-soaked madness hung over Moscow. [270, 325, 673]

That evening, Father read aloud from the newspaper in disbelief:

‘“The poisonings were carried out using slow-acting toxins sprayed via atomisers - primarily mercury salts. The substances were sprayed onto carpets, curtains and soft furnishings. Inhaled through the lungs, they entered the bloodstream and gradually destroyed the victim’s body at its weakest point, causing death to appear as if from natural causes...”’

The State Security Commissar slurped his soup and muttered into his bowl:

‘I opened a little book for Stalin and said: “See? Same methods as in the sixteenth century. Renaiiiiii-ssance!”’ He stirred his soup with a spoon and reached for the salt.

‘By the way, it was with this very hand that I shot the regicide Beloborodov today...’

‘Listen, Maksim,’ said his father. ‘Do you really believe Lenin’s closest comrades were foreign spies? It’s impossible to believe!’

‘What’s so impossible about it?’ Maksim stared grimly into his plate. ‘Lenin himself was a German spy. The Germans sent him to Russia in a sealed carriage. As the priest, so the parish.’

His father read out the closing statement of Prosecutor Vyshinsky:

‘“All these enemies of the people must be shot like rabid dogs!”’

‘That’s just empty prosecutor’s rhetoric,’ the father scoffed.

‘It’s not rhetoric - it’s truth,’ Maksim growled. ‘These people are far worse than rabid dogs. At least with dogs you can see it straight away - with these you can’t.’ [346]

‘But surely those honourable revolutionaries,’ said the mother softly, ‘weren’t also informants for the Tsarist secret police?’

‘Of course they were,’ Maksim nodded. ‘During raids on the opposition archives, we found denunciations to the Okhrana written in Comrade Stalin’s own hand. The opposition had kept them in reserve as a last weapon. But I didn’t show those youthful reminiscences to Iosif Vissarionovich.’ [177, 299, 578, 647]

‘Good heavens,’ sighed the mother. ‘How dreadful.’

‘Revolutionaries after the revolution are like spiders in a jar,’ said the Doctor of Social Sciences. ‘And they’ll fight each other for power until they’ve ripped each other to pieces. If you read the Okhrana archives, you’ll see that the SRs were the most active in preparing the revolution. And after it, they were the first to be shot. Then the Bolsheviks devoured the Mensheviks. Now the Bolsheviks are devouring each other. It was the same with the Jacobins and the Girondins. And who brought Hitler to power? The Stormtroopers. Where are they now? Hitler had them all shot. In the end there’s always one big spider left - Napoleon, Hitler, or Stalin. That’s a historical law. And the sooner it ends, the better.’

After dinner, Maksim poured himself a glass of vodka in a tea-glass, drank half of it and leaned back in his chair, exhausted. His father folded the newspaper and sighed.

‘I still don’t believe these accusations.’

‘Well, yes, there’s only a grain of truth in them,’ Maksim smirked crookedly. ‘And if I told you the whole truth, you’d believe even less. Back in the day, Lenin demanded that his party be a “party of professional revolutionaries”. But the whole secret is that true revolutionaries, professional revolutionaries - are not ordinary people. They are a special breed.’

‘What sort of special breed?’

‘A very specific category of people... With certain unique complexes...’

‘Strange. What kind of complexes?’

The Doctor of Social Sciences finished his vodka and raised a finger like a lecturer.

‘That’s where it all begins... It’s what they used to call possession. When a person develops this complex, he becomes possessed... Or turns into a devil... And starts doing all sorts of devilry... You understand?’

Seeing that Maksim had drunk too much and started raving again about unclean spirits, the father cautiously said:

‘Hmm, that’s hard to believe.’

‘Yes, but it’s true... When we arrest these devils, I put them through the strictest medical exams... Ana-a-lysis...’

‘What kind of analysis?’

‘All sorts... Including endocrine analysis... And almost all of them show the same thing. What used to be called demonic possession. One of the most dangerous manifestations of this possession is an uncontrollable, pathological thirst for power. A special power complex. And people possessed by this complex will do anything - any crime - for the sake of power.’ [620, 679]

The Soviet Dr Faustus tapped the vodka bottle:

‘For true, born revolutionaries, revolution is a struggle for power. Everything else is just a means to that end. And no one hates each other more than these complex-ridden devils fighting over power - or the illusion of power. Lenin spent more time on factional strife than fighting Tsarism. That’s why these devils denounced each other to the Okhrana. And all scrambled to collaborate with foreign intelligence. -’ Maksim rapped the table with his fist. ‘That’s why the Bible says their master - the devil - always lusts after power.’

The next evening, reading the latest confessional speeches of the enemies of the people, Father again shook his head and grumbled:

‘But these are old Bolsheviks. They survived Tsarist prisons and exile and never once recanted. And now they issue these utterly incredible self-accusations?’

‘They say they’re given some sort of stupefying injections,’ remarked Mother.

‘Not stupefying - clarifying,’ the State Security Commissar corrected her. ‘I inject them with little concoctions that expel what used to be called demons. Then they become temporarily normal people, realise their sins - and confess. For the public trials I give them something a bit stronger. That’s when they even feel drawn to repentance - and begin self-flagellating.’ The Doctor of Social Sciences reached for his glass of vodka. ‘Besides, all of this fully corresponds to the fundamental law of dialectical materialism - the unity and struggle of opposites as the driving force of historical development. Borya, do you know that law?’ [549]

‘I do.’

‘But that directly contradicts the law of class struggle as the principal driver of history. Where is the unity in class struggle?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Exactly. No professor of Marxism-Leninism can explain that contradiction. And if one does, he’ll be shot.’

‘Why?’ asked Father.

‘Because this Marxist “unity and struggle of opposites”... Ha! Why, Marx simply rephrased the old formula of the mediaeval devil-worshippers... But you can’t fool me... I know all about it.’

‘What formula is that?’ asked Boris, intrigued.

‘In daemone deus,’ the State Security Commissar hissed through his teeth. ‘God in the devil... There you have the whole secret of the unity and struggle of opposites.’ [586]

‘Yes, but what does it mean?’

‘It’s a philosophical riddle - the philosopher’s stone - on which the greatest minds of mankind have broken themselves. Some even went mad. Because the riddle is unsolvable.’

‘Well, and have you solved it?’ Boris winked.

‘Of course,’ said the disciple of Papa Innokenty with complete confidence. ‘God is God and the devil is the devil!’ [93, 519]

‘Listen, Maksim.’ Father took off his pince-nez and, embarrassed, began polishing it with his handkerchief. ‘You yourself said some people go mad over these things. And you do know that there’s such a thing as religious mania?... Maybe you’ve been too affected by all those books of yours about unclean spirits?’

The Doctor of Social Sciences snorted disdainfully:

‘If ever the saying “Physician, heal thyself” applies, it’s to psychiatrists. Most psychiatrists become psychiatrists in order to be closer to their own kind. But we know that too.’

Father pretended to keep polishing his pince-nez. Maksim smiled with self-assurance.

‘Better yet, send that psychiatrist to me. I’ll find something peculiar in him quicker than he finds it in me.’

While the elder brother was at work, Boris found on Maksim’s desk a copy of Machiavelli’s *The Prince* - often cited as a model of political cynicism. The book was written in Italy during the time of Cesare Borgia, when a brutal struggle raged among local princes, who employed every means: murder, poisoning, betrayal and forgery. Machiavelli fully justified all these princely crimes and essentially laid out a philosophical recipe for political treachery, amorality, all manner of meanness and cunning.

The edition on Maksim’s desk had been published in Moscow shortly before Kirov’s assassination. A fine edition by “Academia”. Antique engravings. Even a new translation.

But the most astonishing thing was that the preface to *The Prince* had been written by Kamenev. He was a cultured and gentle man, a typical quiet idealist from Lenin's old guard. Yet in the preface he praised Machiavelli's philosophy and strongly recommended it as a practical guide to politics.

Soon after, Kamenev was arrested under the case of the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre" and fell victim to the very recipe he had praised so earnestly. Shortly after that, *The Prince* itself was arrested - banned and withdrawn from circulation.

On the title page, in Maksim's handwriting, was scrawled: 'Notable that Machiavelli's philosophy is divided into 13 principles. This is no coincidence, but deliberate. Check his *Mandrake*. Grows beneath the gallows.'

When Boris enrolled at the industrial institute, a new NKVD emblem appeared on the uniforms of state security personnel: a snake reared up and pierced by a sword. Seeing this oval emblem, embroidered in gold and silver, on Maksim's sleeve, Boris asked:

'What's that snake supposed to be?'

'It's the hydra of re-evolution,' replied Maksim. Catching his younger brother's sceptical look, he rummaged in a drawer and pulled out a bundle of photographs filed in a special NKVD folder. It was a vast collection of badges, coats of arms, flags and symbols of various revolutionary, terrorist and secret societies, from Egyptian pyramids to the Great October Revolution. In many photographs, the exact same reared snake appeared, pierced by a sword like the one on the commissar's sleeve.

'What does it mean?' asked the student.

'It means the snake sheds its skin but never changes its nature,' Maksim stretched wearily. 'I came up with that emblem on purpose... So they'd know that I know them too.'

'Who are "they"?'

'The same ones,' the commissar replied, 'who used to be called demons, devils and warlocks.'

'All right,' said Boris. 'So you shoot the revolutionaries and lie that they're counterrevolutionaries.'

'The point is,' the Doctor of Social Sciences smirked, 'that according to the dialectical law of the unity of opposites, revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries are the same thing.'

'How's that possible?'

'Simple. True revolutionaries are permanent revolutionaries. After the revolution, they continue to rage - only now against the new revolutionary regime - and thereby become counterrevolutionaries. That's why, after the revolution, according to the second part of Marxist dialectics - the struggle of opposites - all revolutionaries must be shot at once, like rabid dogs. Got it?' [96, 522]

‘How much vodka have you had today?’ asked the younger brother.

‘There we go,’ grumbled the elder. ‘I’m explaining the essence of Marxism to him and he doesn’t get it... Stalin believes me... And this fool doesn’t.’

Gradually, the bloody rampage of the NKVD engulfed the whole country. Everyone was being taken - but most of all, Party members. The iron gloves of the new NKVD chief Yezhov swept away almost all regional, city and district Party and Soviet leaders in turn. New ones were appointed. Then they too, soon enough, were arrested. It seemed as if the Soviet regime was either biting its own tail or shedding its skin. [132, 269, 324, 547, 672]

Enemies of the people were often arrested along with their families. The wives were sent into exile, the children into special orphanages.

Father Rudnev was a remarkably kind man. In the evenings he enjoyed long sessions of tea and reading the newspaper. Through the open window, flies would buzz in and fall into his tea. Father would fish them out with a spoon, take them onto the balcony and administer artificial respiration - blowing on them until they flew away. He was, in the truest sense, a man who wouldn’t harm a fly. Now, reading newspapers full of NKVD bloodbaths, he tried not to look at Maksim, who sat across from him in NKVD general’s uniform.

‘But what are the wives of the arrested guilty of?’ Father muttered into his grey moustache. ‘Or the little children?’

The State Security Commissar looked at his father with eyes bloodshot from vodka and sleepless nights:

‘Listen, you’re a gynaecologist and I’m a sociologist... Tell me - surely you, a gynaecologist, know that these... Let’s say, devils can only marry these... Let’s say, she-devils?’ He blinked his pale eyelashes. ‘Surely you, a gynaecologist, know that instead of children they give birth to these... Let’s say, little devils?’

Father sat there pretending not to hear.

‘That’s why the Inquisition once burned this unclean brood family by family,’ said Maksim. ‘Well now, it’s the same story...’

The doctor of gynaecology frowned disapprovingly, while the doctor of sociology continued:

‘Take Lenin’s elder brother, Alexander - hanged for an attempt on Alexander III. If they’d cleared out that whole family back then, there’d have been no Lenin. Incidentally, one Bronisław Piłsudski was involved in the same plot. If they’d cleaned out his family too, then... Well, there’d have been no Marshal Józef Piłsudski either - who was Bronisław’s younger brother. But since that wasn’t done, during the Russo-Japanese War this Józef became the leader of Polish socialists, begged money from the Japanese, dabbled in banditry and eventually became the dictator of Poland. First he sabotaged the Tsar, then Lenin and finally Stalin. That’s why we don’t repeat the mistakes of the Tsarist government. We take a strictly scientific approach. Social diseases must not only be treated, but prevented. As a precaution.’ [544]

Soon a wave of arrests swept through the ranks of livestock sovkhoz directors, zootechnicians and veterinarians. They were accused of organising mass cattle deaths.

‘Hey, you, warlock,’ said Boris, ‘do you seriously think the vets were poisoning the cows?’

Instead of replying, Maksim pulled a book from the shelf and jabbed a finger at the page:

‘Read!’

‘“Many persons... Gave themselves over to devils... And through sorcery,”’ Boris read, ‘“through vile deeds and terrible crimes, killed... Beasts of burden, herd animals and other livestock...”’

‘Where’s that from?’

‘That’s from a papal bull of Pope Innocent the Eighth.’

Further down, it read: ‘“These villains cause suffering and torment... Inflict upon animals horrible and pitiable tortures and afflictions, both internal and external.”’

‘You see,’ said the commissar. ‘You just have to know your history.’

Near their house was the Officers’ House of Culture Park. In that park was an old watchman and a little she-ass, with which he hauled firewood and fallen leaves. Now the watchman had been arrested as well. Rumour had it that he had been engaging in certain unseemly acts with the donkey. So they pinned on him the crime of undermining the socialist economy.

Officially, the NKVD had twelve departments. When drunk, Maksim would boast that his 13th Department was so secret that not even the employees of the other twelve departments knew it existed.

The decision to carry out the purge had been passed by the Politburo on 13 May 1935. But Maksim claimed that the entire plan for the purge had been developed by his Research Institute, and overall supervision entrusted to his 13th Department of the NKVD.

‘You’re grabbing far too many people,’ his father reproached him.

‘It’s a complex social operation,’ the Doctor of Social Sciences defended himself. ‘Like gangrene. Or cancer. You have to cut through living flesh.’

‘God help us,’ sighed the mother. ‘What a horror!’

Seeing that both his father and mother were against him and would not be persuaded, Maksim spoke most openly with his younger brother. And the further the purge progressed, the more Boris became convinced that Maksim had gone mad.

After the Revolution, when the new Criminal Code of the USSR was being drafted, all political crimes were categorised under Article 58 of that code. Thus all purge victims, all enemies of the people, now fell under Article 58.

And Maksim, obsessed with his mediaeval cabalism, said:

‘Bobka, do you know what Article 58 really means?’

‘What?’

‘Well, add five and eight. How much does that make?’

‘Five plus eight... Thirteen.’

‘There you are... Thirteen! That’s no coincidence - it’s symbolic. Those who drafted the code knew that almost all political crimes stem from the same root.’

‘What root?’

‘From the moon.’

Of course, only a madman would say such a thing. But Stalin’s special representative for matters concerning unclean spirits calmly laid out his argument:

‘Look, Bobka... In our modern calendar, the twelve months are artificial, created purely for convenience. But there used to be a sort of natural lunar calendar - with thirteen months. Because there are thirteen new moons in a year. Primitive peoples would say not “five months” but “five moons”. Even in Russian, the word for “month” also means the moon.’

‘And what’s that got to do with Article 58?’

‘You idiot, listen and don’t interrupt... At first people worshipped the sun. As the life-giving force. As the symbol of life. But later’ - the Soviet Doctor Faustus raised a finger - ‘later, some went into opposition and began worshipping the moon. As the force of death, coldness and lifelessness.’

Boris bent over his political economy textbook and muttered:

‘Let them worship it if they like.’

‘Ah, but it’s not that simple,’ said the State Security Commissar. ‘For them, the moon was a symbol not of life, but of death. And they had their own specific reasons to be interested not in life, but in death. And since there are thirteen moons in a year, they began gathering in circles of thirteen people. That’s where all this devil’s dozen symbolism comes from.’

‘Well, to hell with it!’ said Boris.

‘Oh no,’ the head of the 13th Department of the NKVD shook his head, ‘these are not just people - they are special people... The same ones who were burned in the Middle Ages as witches and warlocks... And the same ones who are now being liquidated as enemies of the people. After all, it was I who suggested the term “enemy of the people” to Stalin. And do you think I just pulled that term off a shelf? No...’ [483]

Maksim rummaged through a pile of biblical literature and began showing it to Boris. Again and again, there were red-pencil underlinings of the phrase: ‘enemies of mankind’.

‘You see!’ said the commissar. ‘That’s where the “enemies of the people” come from. There is nothing new under the moon. You just need to know your history.’

Then the Doctor of Social Sciences once more began to rave that the chief enemy of mankind was Satan himself - that he was the cause of nearly all of humanity’s misfortunes and evils, from trivial marital squabbles to bloody wars and revolutions.

‘And where does this Satan dwell?’ asked Boris.

‘Right here!’ Maksim tapped his forehead. ‘And here too.’ He tapped another place - one that is indecent even to name.

Then he sighed heavily:

‘It’s a wholly philosophical concept. But if one knows this secret, one can unlock all the mysteries of the human soul. One can read the past and the future.’

Boris had once heard there was some connection between genius and madness. Now he looked at Maksim and wondered: was he a genius or simply insane?

In the spring, a letter came from Olga’s parents in Berezovka. With sorrow they reported that Maksim’s little daughter had fallen ill with pneumonia and died. Hearing the sad news, Mother began to weep:

‘Oh God, she was such a sweet child, so healthy.’

Maksim sat scowling and silent.

‘Will you go to the funeral?’ asked Mother.

‘No.’

‘Do you mean to say you don’t even feel sorry for your own child?!’

‘Of course I feel sorry,’ Maksim said bitterly. ‘But this is better...’

‘Better? What do you mean?’

‘That she died a child.’

‘Maksim, how can you say such a thing!’ cried Mother.

‘She was doomed from birth,’ sighed the commissar and covered his eyes with his hand. ‘It’s better this way - for her and for everyone...’

For several minutes he sat in silence. Then, without raising his head, he asked in a low voice:

‘Mother... When I was born... Did you baptise me?’

‘Of course,’ she replied.

‘I didn’t baptise her... I’ll give you my car... Go to Berezovka... Baptise her, even if after death...’ Through the commissar’s fingers, a heavy man’s tear fell onto the table. ‘Hold a memorial service... Do everything you can to save at least her soul...’

Chapter 5. Where Nothing Annihilates

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 8:44

When Maksim was just beginning his career in the NKVD, he often boasted that he worked alongside the famous Chekist Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli. She was renowned for the fact that, coming from an old noble family - either a princess or a semi-princess - she had run away from the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens at the age of seventeen to join the Cheka, where she personally carried out executions. So much so that people even sang songs about her: [51, 53, 126, 312, 417, 486, 488, 541, 660]

Ekh, little apple, where are you rolling? Fall into Zinka's claws - you'll never be back!

For a time she was the head of a provincial Cheka and, in a demonstration of class consciousness, even executed her own parents - personally. Eventually, her cruelty proved too much even for the Cheka and she narrowly escaped execution herself. Trotsky intervened on her behalf, invoking proletarian humanity and the matter was quietly shelved.

Having heard tales of her exploits, Boris was greatly surprised when he met Zinaida Genrikhovna for the first time. She was a very pleasant young woman with a beautiful face and intelligent eyes - tall and slender, with quick, assured movements of well-manicured hands and an energetic, springy gait. One could indeed sense that she might have been some sort of princess from the Institute for Noble Maidens. But this young lady wore military uniform and sharp little rhombuses gleamed predatorily on her crimson collar tabs - an NKVD general.

Later, Boris would often see her at Maksim's new flat. She would help Olga with the housework or tenderly play with the child. Sometimes Olga would take the child out in a pram in Petrovsky Park and Zinaida Genrikhovna would stroll alongside, carrying a milk bottle. Occasionally, her brother would accompany them - a peculiar creature whom everyone called the Hero of Perekop. [487, 661]

It was said that during the Civil War he had commanded a cavalry division or corps and had become famous for his unbelievable bravery. But during the storming of Perekop, he suffered a head injury and sustained brain damage. Since then, he had lived on a special pension from the Council of People's Commissars and behaved eccentrically. Anyone else would have long since been imprisoned for such antics, but as the Hero of Perekop, he got away with everything.

In recognition of his special services to Soviet power, he had been granted an entire manor house, where he lived alone in twenty-five rooms. In one of these, he kept his old battle companion - a white mare. Moreover, he insisted that everyone address him not by name and patronymic, but as the Hero of Perekop, declaring that this was a title awarded to him by the Soviet authorities. He would not respond to any other name.

When the Hero of Perekop marched down the street, a flock of curious boys always followed him, hoping he might pull some new stunt. Boris had once been among them. Adults, however, disliked the Hero and did their best to ignore him.

If Zinaida Genrikhovna was strikingly beautiful, her brother was, by contrast, hideously ugly. He looked exactly like the portrayal of Batko Makhno in the film *Red Imps*. He was the height of a dwarf and always wore special made-to-order boots with high heels - almost like women's - and lacquered tops. Due to his war injuries, one of his legs was shorter than the other and would not bend. This made him twisted and badly lame. His face was pale and bloodless, like a corpse's. In this white face, his eyes were black and sharp as nails. His head was crowned with a huge mane of jet-black hair, coarse as wire, that fell to his shoulders like a lion's mane. Some said that, since his concussion, even the slightest touch to his scalp or hair caused him excruciating headaches, which was why he never cut his hair and went without a hat even in winter. Others claimed the opposite - that the Hero spent whole days in the barber's, and that his remarkable mane was always thoroughly combed, pomaded and perfumed, even set with a six-month perm. Some believed he had grown such a mane deliberately, to appear taller.

The Hero of Perekop had also invented for himself a fantastical, self-fashioned military uniform: bright red cavalry breeches with a leather seat and a vivid blue gymnastyorka, cinched with a Caucasian-style belt made of blackened silver, crossed over his chest with straps. On his left side dangled a curved Caucasian dagger in silver scabbard; on his right, a giant Mauser in a wooden holster with a gold plaque - an Honorary Golden Weapon of the Revolutionary Military Council. [55, 490]

All in all, when the Hero of Perekop walked down the street, he was a terrifying sight. But after he had fired his Mauser at sparrows a few times and chased boys with a drawn sabre, they quietly disarmed him. His Mauser was taken away, leaving only the empty holster with the gold plaque. His sabre was riveted into its scabbard so it could not be drawn.

When his old battle companion - the white mare - died, the Hero held a funeral with a military brass band, buried her in his garden and erected a marble monument adorned with laurel wreaths and lowered flags. He had brought the monument from some cemetery near Moscow, from the grave of a tsarist general.

In place of the white mare, the Hero of Perekop bought himself a huge motorcycle, unscrewed the silencers and roared around on it so noisily that local old women would cross themselves: 'Oh Lord, that devil on his infernal contraption again!' No one had to take away the motorcycle - he soon crashed it and shattered himself along with it.

The local grannies had hoped the Hero would finally die, but he survived. Zinaida Genrikhovna nursed him back to health, tending to her famous brother like a baby and feeding him with a spoon until he could walk again. And as soon as he was back on his feet, he resumed his antics worse than before.

When the Great Purge began, the Hero of Perekop started to fall out of fashion. First, his house was confiscated. He moved into a nearby hotel, bringing with him only two things: a huge concert grand piano, on which he could not play and a wall-sized portrait of himself on the white mare, sabre raised. All day long he would sit at the piano, bang out incomprehensible noises with two fingers and gaze at his portrait.

Then the Hero of Perekop suddenly disappeared. Rumour had it he was imprisoned because of the portrait. One must not hang such a large self-portrait in a country where there is someone greater. This was deemed an insult to Stalin. Along with the Hero of Perekop, his sister Zinaida Genrikhovna vanished too. It was said that she had committed sabotage in the NKVD - executing the wrong people, or rather, doing so at the behest of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist terrorist centre.

'Maks,' asked Boris, 'what was the Hero of Perekop imprisoned for?'

'He had it coming,' muttered the State Security Commissar.

'So you don't know,' the younger man teased.

'Me? Not know?!' the other flared. 'I was the one who arrested him!'

'What for?' the younger pressed.

And then Maksim told a rather improbable story. It turned out the Hero of Perekop had never been a hero at all, and had never even seen Perekop. In reality, he had once been a barber and amateur actor, obsessed with playing heroic roles on stage. Then he simply decided to impersonate the Hero of Perekop.

'Well then, he's a good actor,' said the student. 'And your Soviet government must be idiotic if it's so easy to deceive.'

'It's not that simple,' replied the commissar.

Apparently, a Hero of Perekop had indeed once existed - a completely different man, truly madly brave. So brave, in fact, that even after the Civil War ended, he kept fighting, attacking all and sundry until he was finally arrested by the Cheka. It turned out he had once belonged to the Anarcho-Maximalist party, headquartered in Switzerland, before joining the Bolsheviks during the revolution.

During the Civil War, legends surrounded this hero. He suffered from diabetes and had to give himself injections regularly. Yet so devoted was he to the revolution that he would pull a syringe from his pocket and inject himself through his trousers while still in the saddle, leading his divisions in frontal assaults against White Guard machine-gun nests.

In the Cheka, it emerged that he was simply a morphine addict. His "medicine" was morphine, injected through his trousers. And his reckless courage? It turned out he was half-insane, having attempted suicide multiple times. He was merely seeking death in battle. When he was executed, he smiled blissfully and sang the anarchist march:

Fried chick-en, boiled chick-en,
Even a chick-en wants to live! They caught him, arrested him,
Didn't let him live too long!

This was in southern Russia. Several years later, Zinaida Genrikhovna discovered the file on the executed Hero of Perekop in the Central Cheka Archive in Moscow and noticed he looked remarkably like her brother - right down to the same limp. And then she had an idea.

All the Chekists involved in the hero's case were now dead. No witnesses remained. The case had been top secret, and the execution never reported. But tales of his heroism had been widely published in every newspaper.

Zinaida Genrikhovna discussed the idea with her brother, who was delighted. The Cheka archive still contained all the documents and revolutionary decorations of the executed hero. She passed it all to her brother and destroyed the rest. Using a photo of the dead hero, he altered his appearance: he grew the same wild mane of hair, ordered a uniform identical to the one the hero had worn. In that chaotic post-revolutionary time, eccentrics were everywhere and no one questioned anything. Thus, the amateur actor, who had dreamed of heroic roles, became the real Hero of Perekop.

'So what did you do with this "hero"?' asked Boris.

'I laid all the evidence out before him and said, "Well, confess!" And he replied, "No, I lived a hero and I shall die a hero!" I said, "Enough with the acting. You fool, this isn't a theatre stage, it's the NKVD. I'll have you packed off to Siberia." And he just repeated, "I'll go to Siberia if I must. But at least everyone will know that I'm the Hero of Perekop. I suffered for the truth!"'

The State Security Commissar threw up his hands helplessly.

'You try reasoning with someone like that. The idiot has so thoroughly inhabited the role that he no longer knows where reality ends and fantasy begins. And the truth is, he's completely harmless. He only looks terrifying. In reality, he's a pitiful coward. But he's willing to go to Siberia just to preserve the mask of the hero. And it's all that damned Zinka's fault. She looks like an angel, but she's Satan in a skirt.'

'So how was the case uncovered?' Boris asked.

'I have a new method. I don't proceed from the crime to the criminal, but the other way round - from the criminal to the crime.'

'How do you mean?'

'It's very simple. I take a person, hand him a sheet of paper and say, "Right, write it down - confess!"'

'Brilliant,' said the student. 'I might end up writing something myself - like how I once stole apples from the neighbours.'

'Idiot,' said the Doctor of Social Sciences. 'It's a scientific method. I don't just pick anyone. I pick those where I already know there's something behind them. I just don't know exactly what. So I say to that kind, "Right, confess!"'

'And if he hasn't done anything?'

'If he hasn't yet, he will eventually.'

'What a method,' the student remarked.

‘Yes, and it’s exactly with that method,’ said the State Security Commissar, ‘that I cracked the Hero of Perekop case. I knew Zinka would be up to her ears in crimes. I dug about - and I found them.’

‘So that’s why she was imprisoned?’

‘No, that was all peripheral... She’s got far worse things behind her.’

‘Like what?’

‘That’s classified,’ said the Commissar curtly.

On the shelf behind Maksim lay a large, flat box containing a collection of badges with numbered labels. One of the badges bore a tiny golden emblem - a skull and crossbones, like on a pirate flag. These were clearly not Pioneer pins.

Next to it lay a speckled brown shell, about half the size of a walnut. It was mounted in a thin platinum wire setting, fashioned into a pendant or charm. A label was attached to it, written in the calligraphic hand of an NKVD military clerk: ‘Case of the “Blue Star”. Exhibit No. 127-D. Confiscated during the search of Citizen Orbeli, Zinaida Genrikhovna.’ [58, 59, 65, 98, 164, 183, 236, 305, 307, 310, 493, 494, 500, 524, 584, 615]

‘Maks, what’s this little toy?’ Boris asked.

‘It’s a beetle,’ replied the Commissar.

‘What sort of beetle? That’s a shell.’

‘It’s their secret jargon. This shell stands in for a scarab, which symbolised the dung beetle.’ [61, 496]

‘And why the hell do you need a beetle?’

The commissar-occultist grimaced, as though weary of explaining higher arcana to fools. Then he began mumbling that in Ancient Egypt there had been special secret sects for whom the dung beetle and its ball represented the turning of the sun and the cycle of life. To identify one another, members of these sects used scarabs as secret tokens.

But the deeper mystery, he said, lay in the fact that these secret sects were something like ancient Egyptian enemies of the people. That is why they hid in abandoned pyramids, while the ancient Egyptian NKVD hunted them down. When caught, they were stoned to death according to the methods of the time. Later, similar secret sects existed in Europe, but they used shells as their symbolic token, since they resembled beetles from above. Eventually, these shells became a female-specific symbol used in various Dianic cults.

‘Alright,’ said Boris. ‘So what’s the secret?’

‘Turn the shell over,’ muttered the State Security Commissar. ‘See what it reminds you of - in the female department...’

‘Yeah… it does look like that,’ Boris agreed. ‘What symbolism!’

The mysterious shell represented a female symbol - the sort typically scrawled on the walls of public lavatories.

One time, Boris found a book in Maksim’s room: *The Invisible World of Satan* by a certain George Sinclair, published in Edinburgh in 1875. In the margins were notes with references to the Hero of Perekop and his sister, NKVD General Zinaida Genrikhovna, in connection with some case entitled ‘Blue Star’. The book described the following: [56, 491]

‘...Thomas Weir, a hypocritical Puritan who even led a strict Presbyterian community and was regarded as almost saintly in Edinburgh, had all the while been leading a life of vile depravity and wallowing in the most repugnant and unnatural crimes. In 1670, when he turned seventy, he was seized by dreadful fits of remorse and despair. The torments of his unclean conscience drove him to the brink of madness and his agony could only be relieved by a full, frank and public confession of his abominations. For several months, his congregation tried to hush the affair to avoid scandal and disgrace, but his confessor revealed the secret to the Lord Mayor, who ordered an inquest. The wretched old man, insisting that “the terrors of the Lord weighed heavily upon his soul and compelled him to confess,” was arrested along with his feeble-minded sister Jean, who had been involved in his loathsome acts.’ [57, 348]

Boris recalled the Hero of Perekop strutting solemnly through the streets in his red breeches, with his crooked sabre and colossal Mauser - a Golden Weapon of the Revolutionary Military Council. And the book continued:

‘...Throughout his imprisonment, Thomas Weir suffered acutely under the heavy wrath of God, which plunged him into despair. To several confessors who visited him, he admitted: “I know that I am damned to eternal perdition and my sentence is already signed in heaven... Therefore I find within my soul nothing but darkness, gloom and ash and it burns me like the lowest depths of hell.”
Such sudden turbulence of feeling, hatred of vile deeds, combined with total incapacity to renounce them, is understandable in a seventy-year-old man whose flesh is corroded by years of excess and whose mind is weakened by the strain of constantly playing an artificial and burdensome role.’

Boris remembered seeing Zinaida Genrikhovna at Maksim’s flat, tenderly helping Olga with household chores. Or how they had walked together in Petrovsky Park with the child and alongside them hobbled the limping Hero of Perekop, carefully carrying the baby’s milk bottle. And *The Invisible World of Satan* reported:

‘Thomas Weir’s sister denounced her brother as a sorcerer. Though rumours of his involvement in magic and incantations had long been circulating, and strange tales were passed from mouth to mouth, sorcery was not the principal charge laid against him in court. He was convicted of adultery, fornication, incest and sodomy and for these was sentenced to be hanged and then burned at the stake between Edinburgh and Leith on Monday 11 April 1670, so that his body might be reduced to ashes. His mad sister Jean Weir was convicted of incest and sorcery and was hanged the following day, 12 April, in Edinburgh’s market square.’

When Boris asked what all this had to do with the Hero of Perekop and Zinaida Genrikhovna, Maksim answered evasively:

‘Comparative psychoanalysis. The inquisitorial judges understood such matters better than judges do today.’

Although the Hero of Perekop was hideously ugly, Zinaida Genrikhovna had often remarked that, strangely enough, he was wildly popular with women. Rumours abounded that the Hero of Perekop was an incurable heart-throb and was always involved in romantic entanglements.

People say some women are especially attracted to ugly men. The Duchess of Alba, for example, loved the artist Goya for his ugliness, to highlight her own beauty.

Reflecting on Olga’s mysterious suicide, Boris sometimes wondered whether perhaps she had simply had a fling with the Hero of Perekop. And when Maksim found out... Well, perhaps that explained why he avoided discussing it and instead invented all these medieval psychoanalyses.

For all her Madonna-like appearance, Olga had always seemed a little odd. After all, she had already left two suicides in her wake.

While the head of the NKVD’s 13th Department was at work, Boris conducted a small search in his room. Confident that no one would understand his occult nonsense, Maksim had stopped hiding his papers and now concealed things only through cryptic notations.

Under the box containing the strange death-symbol badges, Boris found a folder bearing the name Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli. Instead of the usual questionnaire on social origin, on top lay a family tree of the Orbeli line. Scrawled in pencil at the side were notes: ‘One grandfather was an alcoholic and hanged himself, the grandmother became a nun. The other grandfather was a famous psychiatrist and the grandmother a nihilist.’

That psychiatrist-grandfather and nihilist-grandmother had founded in Moscow a certain religious-philosophical society called the ‘Blue Star’. Despite being ostensibly humanitarian and liberal, the society was somehow secret. Hence some called its members humanists, others satanists. The grandfather was the original owner of the collection of mysterious death-symbol badges. [216]

If her father had been a bona fide prince, her mother was cryptically labelled ‘Martian’.

Thus, the former revolutionary heroine and famed Chekist Zinaida Genrikhovna was, by blood, half-princess, half-Martian. A marginal note in pencil added: ‘A half-breed hybrid of Satan and the Antichrist. A typical phenomenon.’

Apparently, Maksim had read too many science fiction novels about Martians plotting to seize control of the Earth, and had adopted the idea of “Martians” as a cipher for use in the 13th Department. And then, to complete the allegory, he added biblical characters in the form of the Antichrist. But what sort of cocktail was this - made of Satan and the Antichrist?

In the margin, a practical note had been added: ‘We find this same process in the families of Lenin and seemingly Hitler and Himmler. In Stalin’s family, however, this process appears to unfold in the reverse order.’

Within the religious-philosophical society ‘Blue Star’, the group had studied the philosophy of Solovyov and Berdyaev, who were known as “God-seekers”. Nearby lay a report compiled by specialists from the 13th Department. God-seeker Solovyov had reportedly complained of being tormented by demons and had treated these afflictions with turpentine. He eventually died of poisoning from homemade sweets laced with it. [253, 294, 304, 642, 652]

In the margin, a note by Doctor of Philosophy Rudnev: ‘That God-seeker ought not to have swallowed turpentine, but rubbed it on his backside.’

As for Berdyaev - whom some regard as the most significant Russian philosopher of the 20th century - the 13th Department specialists provided the following profile. He began with Marxism, for which he was once exiled. Then he plunged into God-seeking. For this turn towards religious philosophy, in 1915 he was brought before the Holy Synod and sentenced to lifelong exile in Siberia - an unprecedented punishment in Russian history. The February Revolution saved him from that fate. But soon afterwards, even Kerensky’s government jailed him. The October Revolution released him, but the Bolsheviks too quickly grew tired of the irrepressible God-seeker and expelled him from the country in 1922 along with a group of his fellow thinkers.

Summary of Berdyaev’s philosophy: discussions of the God-man and man-God. A doctrine of benevolent evil and malevolent good:
‘Sometimes it is right to follow the path of evil, as it may lead to the highest good.’
He preached a ‘comradeship in the Antichrist, a kingdom of the Prince of This World’. A metaphysics of tragic freedom, which ‘has its root in the Nothing’. He wrote “Devil” and “Antichrist” with capital letters. He was an existentialist, that is, he affirmed the existence of Satan. He licked the Antichrist’s backside. He praised secret societies such as the “Blue Star”. He was a key figure in creating the schism in the Orthodox Church abroad. See case: Saint-Berdyaev Theological Academy. [523]

In the margin, a note by Dr Rudnev:
‘Berdyaev’s philosophy is a classic example of philosophical sixty-nine - for instance, his good evil and evil good. The Holy Synod was right to sentence him to eternal exile in Siberia.’

It had been compiled by the Cheka in 1918. Alongside it was a transcript of an interrogation of one of the members of this religious-philosophical society. In addition to the philosophies of Solovyov and Berdyaev, they were interested in Steiner’s anthroposophy, Madame Blavatsky’s occult theosophy, Gurdjieff’s method for achieving happiness, yogic cults and all manner of mysticism. [67, 502]

In the sphere of religion, in their search for a new god, these God-seekers experimented with what had once been known as the Black Mass. They would set up a mock altar. But instead of a crucifix, they would “crucify” a naked woman - invariably a virgin - who symbolised the Virgin Mary. Then the God-seekers would queue up and press their lips to this modernist crucifix - kissing and licking the nude girl in the sanctum sanctorum. [66, 501]

Beside this, in faded purple ink, was a marginal note written by the Chekist who had recorded the interrogation in 1918. With the brutal frankness of a barbarian, he wrote:
‘This is nothing but a gang of degenerates. Not philosophers - perverts.’

The Eucharist, too, was modernised according to their own rules. Christians took communion from chalices containing wine and prosphora, symbolising the blood and flesh of the Saviour. The modernist God-seekers, according to the rites of the Black Mass, filled their chalices with urine and excrement, formed a queue and consumed them.

Alongside, another note in faded purple ink by the same Chekist-barbarian:
‘They’re just bloody...eaters. Rotten intelligentsia.

Below, a more recent and cultured annotation from a 13th Department specialist:
‘Cunnilingus. Urophilia. Coprophilia. Simulation of a mediaeval Black Mass (see Appendix No. 8).’

Immediately following was Appendix No. 8: a photocopy of some mediaeval Inquisition protocol describing a Black Mass, in which 16th-century Satanists burnt black candles and engaged in precisely the same activities as the 20th-century God-seekers.

In the ‘Blue Star’ membership list, the names of Prince Orbeli and his wife were marked with a cross. Next to it, in red ink, in neat and elegant handwriting: ‘To be shot.’
And beneath, in the same elegant script: ‘Chairwoman of the Provincial Cheka - Zinaida Orbeli.’

At the same time, this graduate of the Institute for Noble Maidens recommended to higher authorities that all the other God-seekers be lined up and shot. But Trotsky personally intervened on their behalf. He was supported by Lunacharsky, Commissar for Enlightenment, who had himself once dabbled in God-seeking and by Bonch-Bruyevich, manager of the Council of People's Commissars, who had engaged in God-seeking before the revolution alongside Leo Tolstoy and after the revolution became Lenin’s right-hand administrator. [331]

This was followed by a memo from the 13th Department specialists. When the young revolutionary Trotsky was imprisoned by the gendarmes in Odessa, he used his time for self-education, reading a great number of books which he ordered from authorised lists. Later, the handwritten reading lists from the tsarist gendarmerie archives found their way into the hands of the 13th Department of the NKVD. But they contained no works of Karl Marx, whom Trotsky had reportedly mocked, nor did they include histories of communism. Rather, they were books on the theory and practice of precisely those esoteric secret societies that some called humanist, others satanist. Trotsky studied these books meticulously and to help him remember, he compiled an extensive summary running to a thousand pages. This mysterious compendium, which later vanished without trace, was mentioned by several of Trotsky’s foreign biographers.

Although in 1918 the ‘Blue Star’ case was closed by order of the humanist Trotsky, in 1936 the NKVD reopened the file. The list contained several hundred individuals.

Some were exiled abroad, again with Trotsky’s help. Some died. But now the 13th Department was meticulously investigating all relatives, children and even acquaintances of these God-seekers.

Among the names, Boris found several he recognised. There was the father of Ivan Strannik, with whom Boris had been in the same school class. This father was also named Ivan and the 13th Department specialists provided the following report on him.

Before the revolution, he had been a minor Futurist poet, writing under the pseudonym Ivan Mort. But the 13th Department experts were better educated than the Chekist-barbarians of 1918. They even knew Latin and thus were intrigued by the following: why had Ivan Strannik-Mort chosen a pseudonym that meant "death" in Latin? [83, 520]

If God-seeker Berdyaev had asserted that Satan and the Antichrist exist - of course, from an abstract philosophical standpoint - the investigators of the 13th Department approached the question from the angle of dialectical materialism. They seriously believed that Satan and the Antichrist not only existed, but even entered into marriage. Yes, they wrote of strange mixed marriages... Between Satan and the Antichrist!

Such a strange, mixed marriage was that of the poet Ivan Strannik-Mort. He was also a drug addict. His wife was lame. After the revolution, she had worked in the Cheka. Then, as a result of that nerve-wracking work, she suffered a stroke and became bedridden.

What followed could have been lifted from Dostoevsky. The Martian wife lay in bed for years, soiling herself. The devoted Futurist husband ran around with the chamber pot. And then, to relax, he would sniff cocaine.

But that was not all. Though paralysed, his wife was also afflicted with nymphomania. Her loving husband dutifully brought her lovers. Afterwards, to calm himself down, he would again turn to cocaine.

Among the regular clients of this nymphomaniac was an Armenian. In the margin, a note from the 13th Department: 'That's why they call these antics "Armenian jokes". We know all about these jokes.'

Next in the queue was some former monk turned defrocked priest, expelled from the monastery for lechery. The 13th Department recorded all of this meticulously. They suspected that Ivan Strannik was a little strange, a little unhinged. But having read Berdyaev, he considered himself a kind of God-man or man-God, burdened with a special mission. As a censor in the city council's press department, just as in his private life, he did everything in reverse. He approved decadent, subversive scribblings by his fellow travellers, saying it was his "party line" and suppressed healthy proletarian literature, calling it the ravings of a mad cow.

That was why the 13th Department classified him as a saboteur. A report signed by Dr Bykov, Major of the NKVD medical service, concluded: 'To be treated through labour, following Tolstoy's method. Incidentally, this therapy greatly helped Dostoevsky.' [70, 505]

Next came a medical certificate about his son, Ivan Strannik Junior. The boy, it turned out, had a peculiar physical defect scientifically termed 'phimosis', or in colloquial Russian, 'nezalupa' [TN: slang for an unretracted foreskin]. Consequently, when Vanya reached sexual maturity, he would inevitably have to undergo circumcision. [47]

The school report stated that Vanya performed so poorly in all subjects that at one point they considered transferring him to a special school for defective children. Yet at the same time, Vanya wrote such good poetry that they instead decided to move him to a special school for gifted children.

Boris turned the pages. There followed a photocopy of some mediaeval treatise in which learned monks solemnly declared that if a Christian woman copulated with the Antichrist, it was equivalent to copulating with a dog and that such a couple, after due prayer, ought to be burnt at the stake. Not the dog, which bore no guilt, but the humans, for such a union with the Antichrist was taken as sure proof of a pact with the Devil. A reference followed to a certain French deacon who sinned with an anti-Christian woman and was therefore burned.

Strange, Boris thought. God-seeker Berdyaev raved about Satan and the Antichrist, and so did the monks. But why was the 13th Department pursuing the same line? In this diabolical mess, not even the Devil himself could sort things out.

The ‘Blue Star’ file also mentioned Fedka the Cross-Eyed, who had once been considered the most notorious thug in the area. The very one, after whose beatings Maksim used to pray to God and beg to become big and strong. It turned out Fedka the Cross-Eyed was the full brother of the poet Ivan Strannik Senior.

And the poet Ivan Strannik Junior was the cousin of Zavalyshin, the man with whom Boris had once gone hunting and who later shot himself over Olga. Zavalyshin’s mother was also listed among the ‘Blue Star’ society. More family links.

There too was Irina’s mother, in whose house Boris had often attended gatherings and where the angelic Olga had once lodged as a tenant. In their youth, before the revolution, Irina’s mother and Zavalyshin’s mother had been inseparable friends. They wrote poetry, dabbled in mysticism and theories about the “third eye” that sees what others do not. They also attended some club devoted to Gurdjieff’s method of finding happiness. That club had functioned as a kind of satellite branch of ‘Blue Star’. It was there that the inseparable friends found their happiness - meaning their husbands, Koryakovich and Zavalyshin - who were themselves great friends. But those husbands had been entangled with Menshevik revolutionaries. After the revolution, the Bolsheviks executed Koryakovich for counter-revolution, and the news so devastated Zavalyshin that he shot himself in grief. [74, 509]

Alongside Gurdjieff’s circle, the ‘Blue Star’ society had another offshoot, like the rays of a star - a theosophical group that sought happiness through table-turning and summoning spirits. One of its members had been the father of the beautiful Olga - Georges Geyer, a Baltic German. There was a youthful photograph of him: a very handsome, cherub-like young man in the uniform of the Tsar’s Page Corps. [72, 507]

His wife, however, Dora Mazurkina, was a true virago, a highwaywoman in spirit. She was older than her husband. If papa-cherub was more interested in table-turning, mama-bandit was a committed Bolshevik, who even personally knew Comrade Lenin, having once been friends with his wife. [508]

Below was an extensive note in Maksim’s own hand. Firstly, according to the code of the 13th Department, his mother-in-law Dora Mazurkina was some sort of defector. But she had defected only between Reds and Whites - not between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. No, using

the terminology of God-seeker Berdyaev and the NKVD's 13th Department, this mother-in-law-defector had shifted allegiance between Antichrist, Christ and Satan. More precisely, she was a double-defector: her parents had defected from Antichrist to Christ and Dora herself had defected from Christ to Satan.

In red pencil, a note: 'Typical phenomenon. Same thing happened in Lenin's family. When the heat's on, they start running. Shouldn't have broken the first law of dialectical Christianity - that all men are brothers. That law doesn't work retroactively.' [194, 207, 597]

Secondly, following this line of investigation, Maksim discovered that the marriage of his cherubic father-in-law and bandit mother-in-law was yet another mixed marriage - a blend of Satan and Antichrist. And thirdly, the offspring of that union, the angelic Olga - Maksim's wife, who had led him beyond good and evil, beyond life and death - was not merely a woman, but a half-angel and half-Martian. And the bitter cry of Maksim's soul: 'Ah, if only I had known all this before! So much grief and suffering - and all because I didn't know.'

A practical note followed: 'But why, damn it, is there so little about this in the press? Why are the writers silent? Or at best, evasive. Assign Dr Bykov to investigate writers in general and the Union of Soviet Writers in particular.'

Another note on the 'Blue Star' case: it appears that the theosophical circle, aside from table-turning and spirit-summoning in their pursuit of happiness, also engaged in attempts to hybridise Satan and the Antichrist. But at times they themselves feared the outcome of such a hybridisation and thus frequently resorted to artificial insemination, whereby the mother would conceive not from the father, but from an unrelated man.

Naturally, this caught the attention of the 13th Department. How was it done? Quite simply: these beauties, who flitted between Satan and the Antichrist, would buy a used condom from a prostitute and inseminate themselves with a finger. This, according to the 13th Department and the mystical third eye, was one of the occult secrets that allowed them to see what others could not.

In red pencil, this was underlined: 'That's why in Russian slang there exists that odd phrase used for dimwitted children - "made with a finger". The wisdom of the people speaks with the voice of folklore. This method of analysis is known as semantic philosophy.' [75]

Following the path of the mystical third eye, the ever-curious 13th Department diligently recorded that in families where Satan and the Antichrist were hybridised, alongside artificial insemination one often found adopted children being passed off as biological.

A concrete example: 'Lenin's sister Anna - her only child was an adopted son, Georgy Lozgachev. All other siblings of Lenin, as well as Lenin himself (six in total), had no children. That's why the Bible says: "Ye shall know them by their fruits."' [76, 511]

At this point, the 13th Department experts recalled that before the revolution, when people spoke of revolutionaries - or when the Right referred to the Left - they often used a certain infamous compound word with a hyphen, which symbolised the union of Satan and the Antichrist. But after the revolution, this word became forbidden.

Yet this word is so notorious that it is best not even to mention it. Otherwise, a terrible howl, hissing, whistling and caterwauling would erupt, as though someone had stepped on both Satan's and the Antichrist's tail. And then you'd be left trying to explain that all of this came from the fevered imaginings of God-seeker Berdyaev.

However, Boris was not especially interested in all these lofty metaphysical matters. What interested him more were the familiar names found throughout the 'Blue Star' case file. But their children too were bound together by some shared fate. [36, 480]

Zavalyshin's father shot himself - and his son did the same. And not over just anyone, but over Olga. Half-angel Olga had been close friends with the semi-princess Zinaida Genrikhovna - and their parents had been close as well. But however one looked at it, all of this ended badly: either with murder, or suicide, or something equally grim. What kind of devilry was this?

When Boris finished his search in the room of the head of the NKVD's 13th Department, he still had not found what he was really looking for. About the half-hero of Perekop there was only a note from Hairdressing Cooperative No. 5 for Disabled Persons, confirming that he was an invalid, lame and had worked there as a ladies' hairdresser.

Aha, thought Boris, a ladies' hairdresser - a fitting profession. He scratches the ladies behind the ear and whispers in it: 'May I, madam, stand in for your husband if your husband is away on business?'

And when Maksim found out... Well, it was hardly pleasant, your wife cheating on you with some barber - and a lame one at that. That was why Maksim had removed from the 'Blue Star' file everything relating to this hero-hairdresser.

On the back of the 'Blue Star' case folder, in Maksim's own slanted handwriting, was written:
'When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And how can one not lie in such a situation?'

Chapter 6. The Red Cardinal

Now is the judgement of this world;
now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

John 12:31

After the liquidation of the Party leadership, the purge spread to the Red Army. In its entire combat history, the Red Army had never lost so many marshals, generals and senior officers as it did under the NKVD's iron-fisted purge. Decorations and insignia of command - diamonds, bricks and cubes - were torn from the legendary heroes of the Civil War. Then their hands were shackled behind their backs so they could not scream, a chewed-up rubber gag was shoved into their mouths and they were sent to the conveyor of death in the cellars of the NKVD. Or else they were herded into cattle wagons and shipped off, echelon after echelon, to Siberia. [514]

It was said that the condemned were taken to the basement and shot in the back of the head en route. To keep the noise down, the revolution's heroes were executed not with proper combat weapons but with small-calibre bullets of the sort boys use to shoot at rats and crows. Nearby a door led to the morgue, where corpses of the already executed lay stacked in piles. At night these bodies were carted out of the city by lorry, dumped into mass graves like plague-stricken carrion, doused with lime and buried level with the ground. So that not a trace remained. Later, such cemeteries were fenced off with barbed wire and marked with warning signs: 'Danger of anthrax outbreak! Entry forbidden!'

People interpreted it in their own way and said:
'That kind of anthrax will get you sent to Siberia... Best stay away from there...'

Such was how the Soviet authorities rewarded those who had created them.

Father Rudnev had never been a supporter of Soviet power and had steadfastly refused to join the Party, saying he was too old for such things. But he had always stood on the side of the humiliated and offended. So, when he read the newspapers, he would grumble continually:

'To shoot the entire general staff of the Red Army... That's sheer madness!'

'Absolutely right,' Maksim agreed. 'There is a definite connection between intelligence and madness. And the further one goes, the stronger it gets. At a certain point, they coincide. That is one of Comrade Satan's tricks.'

Father rubbed his nose and kept chewing on his newspaper. Maksim tapped his forehead with a finger.

'But the mechanism is as follows. Nearly every genius has a touch of the idiot in him. But that doesn't mean every idiot is a genius. Besides, geniuses are rare, idiots are legion.'

Then the Doctor of Social Sciences launched into a philosophical riff:

‘You see, Father, you are a very kind man. But do you realise that every positive quality, when taken to excess, turns into its opposite? Look here: courage becomes recklessness, generosity becomes prodigality, love becomes jealousy. Likewise, intelligence turns into madness. And blind kindness sometimes becomes complicity in evil. That’s a difficult thing to grasp.

‘Take yourself, for example - a gynaecologist. Of course, you have your Hippocratic oath - to help everyone indiscriminately. You pick up your obstetric forceps and haul out whoever happens to be there. But if you were a psychiatrist, you’d know that there’s a pathological syndrome called the “uterine complex”: it’s when adults wish to return to where you, as a gynaecologist, dragged them out of. These people feel regret at having been born. And if you were a criminologist, you’d know this complex is frequently observed in the most abominable criminals. Though, of course, only after the fact.’

‘You, a gynaecologist, don’t know this. But I, a sociologist, must know all three - the physiological, the psychological and the criminal. This isn’t just sociology. It’s higher sociology. And do you know, Doctor-Gynaecologist, that from the perspective of higher sociology, it would have been better if some of your newborns had been tossed straight into the dustbin?’ [354, 598, 678]

‘Phoo!’ said Father.

‘Exactly!’ said Boris. ‘Like that Zinka Orbeli. They say she even shot her own parents.’

‘Ah, no,’ said the Doctor of Social Sciences. ‘That was the most just thing she ever did. She punished her parents for bringing her into the world.’

‘But why?’

‘She knew why. Because from their side, it was a crime. Just like in Dostoevsky - crime and punishment. Beyond good and evil. Nietzsche didn’t suck that out of his thumb, he got it from life. Good and evil have the same relationship as intelligence and madness.’ The head of the NKVD’s 13th Department furrowed his brow. ‘You, Father, inwardly accuse me of NKVD brutality. But do you know who’s really to blame for this damned purge?’

‘Who?’

‘You... Yes, you and your kind. I have to finish the job you gynaecologists failed to do. That is, not throwing certain newborns into the bin. If one takes the matter seriously, that bin would have contained newborns like Napoleon, Karl Marx, Lenin, Hitler and their ilk. Then there would be peace on Earth, tranquillity and grace. No wars, no revolutions. But since you gynaecologists won’t do it...’

‘You know what, Maksim,’ said Father indignantly, ‘sometimes I’m simply ashamed of you. You spout all this lunacy and in reality you’re exterminating completely innocent people for political reasons.’

‘Ah, is that so!’ said the State Security Commissar. ‘Then let me show you something... What kind of people these are...’

He rummaged through his desk, pulled out a history book, opened it and laid it in front of Father. On the yellowed pages were transcripts from a medieval trial of a large clandestine congregation of witches and warlocks accused of plotting against the English king. After the trial, all the conspirators were ruthlessly hanged.

‘Now look at this,’ said Maksim. It was just a chart of symbols increasing in geometric progression: first triangles, then cubes, bricks and finally diamonds. At the bottom it said these symbols had been used by the builders of the Egyptian pyramids and the priests of Osiris. But in the Middle Ages, witches and warlocks had adopted them for their own secret purposes, imbuing them with arcane meanings. Organising secret plots, they justified themselves by claiming they too were “builders” - like the pyramid builders - and that they were continuing the work of the priests of Osiris.

But the most striking thing was that these magical symbols - triangles, cubes, bricks and diamonds - matched exactly, in the same sequence, the rank insignia of the Red Army’s command staff. The very command staff now being ruthlessly shot or exiled to Siberia, often without any clear explanation.

‘Hmm,’ muttered Father, rubbing his nose with his knuckle. ‘Strange coincidence...’

‘Coincidence?’ said the gloomy advisor to Stalin on matters of the occult. ‘Then take a look at this...’

He produced a second book, bearing the Vatican Censor’s mark: Nihil Obstat - Censor librorum. It described a scandal known as the Affaire des Riches, which had caused a stir in France between 1901 and 1904. Not so long ago, in fact and it had been reported in great detail in the French press. So secret that it had no membership list of its own. Instead, the conspirators compiled a blacklist of 18,000 officers who were not part of their secret group. And it was not the worst officers who were listed, but the best. The conspirators’ influence was so pervasive that this blacklist was stored directly in the French Ministry of War. Its purpose was to prevent the blacklisted from advancing in rank, thus opening space for conspirators from the unnamed list to seize full control of France.

In the margins of the book, Maksim had scribbled triangles, cubes and diamonds - the same insignia of the Red Army command which the head of the NKVD’s 13th Department had now unmasked as secret emblems of the priests of Osiris.

‘Hmm, strange,’ Father repeated.

‘Nothing new under the moon,’ Maksim smirked. ‘One simply needs to know history.’

He insisted that all these conspiracies followed the same principle and were orchestrated by the same socially harmful element, and that the same had happened in the Red Army. The only difference was that in frivolous France it had ended in scandal, whereas in the USSR over 35,000 Soviet officers and generals had been shot, exiled to Siberia, or demoted - including most of the marshals.

‘And what is this socially harmful element?’ asked Boris.

Instead of answering, the Doctor of Social Sciences began swearing foully.

During the purge, the insignia of senior officers in the Red Army and NKVD were changed: generals now wore small gold stars instead of diamonds and marshals wore a single large star. Everywhere hung portraits of the iron Commissar Yezhov, General Commissar of State Security, with a marshal-sized star on his collar. The rest of the commanders still wore their triangles, cubes and bricks, albeit now with new chevrons and sleeve stars.

‘Max,’ said Boris, ‘who dreamed up those toy cubes and bricks?’

‘Who, who... Who created the Red Army? Comrades Lenin and Trotsky.’

Boris nodded towards the new golden star on Maksim’s collar.

‘And why were the insignia only changed for the generals?’

‘I told Stalin to change them,’ grumbled the commissar. ‘As for the rest, I’ll think it over later.’

The purge had already entered its second year. Alongside Lenin’s Bolshevik guard, nearly the entire Comintern apparatus was swept away. Previously, the Comintern had been a haven in Moscow for the leaders and minor bosses of foreign communist parties. Now, as people in Moscow put it, they were ‘sitting the other way round’ - that is, in NKVD cells. They had spent their lives spreading communism throughout the world and now all these communist salesmen were suddenly declared spies, saboteurs, wreckers and in general enemies of the people.

In the Comintern, it was common for both husband and wife to be politically active, so they were usually arrested together. Orphanages suddenly filled with children bearing foreign names. New names were assigned to them so they would not even know who their parents had been. Only the NKVD retained that knowledge.

The mass arrests of foreign communists sent shockwaves around the world and were widely reported in the foreign press, which likened the Soviet purge to a mediaeval ‘witch hunt’. Only there the term was placed in quotation marks, while the organiser of the purge, Doctor of Social Sciences Maksim Rudnev, insisted it was literally true - that they were purging the same types of people on the same grounds as those once pursued by the Inquisition.

Once upon a time, Attila’s contemporaries would turn the skulls of their enemies into drinking cups. Now Maksim clearly felt drawn to the ways of the barbarians. At home, almost every evening, he sat at his rickety table with its three telephones in different colours, leafing through files of ‘enemies of the people’ and drinking vodka from his symbolic but hardly appetising vessel of oblivion: a cup shaped like a human skull. Boris tried not to interfere with him, but once he had reached a certain degree of intoxication, the elder brother would begin to justify himself:

‘Bobka, I know... You all think I’m a bastard... But as Papa Innokenty rightly said, witches and warlocks always try to do harm to people... And I liq... Liq-uidate them... With full scientific and technical rigour... So I’m doing a good deed... According to Berdyaev’s philosophy - about good evil and evil good... I’m doing it... Evil good... Evil, but good...’

‘We know all about your good deeds,’ said Boris. ‘You’d do better to keep quiet.’

‘Want me to prove something to you? You think I’m to blame for this purge... But if you dig deeper, look for the root cause... Then it’s your fault...’

‘Well, then I’m an enemy of the people too,’ Boris agreed.

‘Yes, you’re the one to blame for me running this purge,’ the commissar slurred drunkenly. ‘You fed me that rational seed... From which all this sprouted...’

Boris sat solving problems in the mechanics of materials. Maksim, like a Jesuit, immersed himself in his casuistry.

‘But I’m not accusing you, Bobka... You’re what they call guilty without guilt... Just a dark man... Blind. You don’t even know what the devil is...’

‘And you’ve been drinking vodka with the devil, have you?’

‘What do you understand, boy?’ said the State Security Commissar, shaking his head tiredly and rather sorrowfully. ‘To understand this, you have to experience hell yourself.’

‘So you’ve been to hell now?’ Boris smirked.

‘Didn’t you see it?’ Maksim said quietly. ‘Remember... When you took the pistol from me... That was the devil putting it in my hand... Whispering: “Shoot yourself”... And someone didn’t want that to happen, so he sent you...’

‘I just went to get a book.’

‘Ah, no... It only seems that way to you... From the standpoint of dialectical materialism, nothing happens by chance... Therefore, everything I do now - that’s you again... See?’

The State Security Commissar swirled his skull-shaped cup and rocked side to side like a Chinese figurine.

His younger brother stopped smiling.

‘So what?’

‘What? When I went through that hell... When I saw what it really was... I got to know Comrade Satan and all his brethren... Since then I’ve had personal scores to settle with them... Understand? Personal... So I declare class war on them... I liq-ik... Liquidate them as a class!’ The commissar slumped wearily over his desk, strewn with folders of enemies of the people. ‘Heaven and hell - they’re in the hearts of men... And once I got burned in that hell, my heart burned up too... Since then, I’ve been heart-less... So, Comrade Satan, don’t expect mercy from me...’

While Doctor of Social Sciences Maksim Rudnev was settling his personal scores with the devil and helping Stalin eliminate all opposition in the Soviet Union, he constantly encountered opposition at home in his own family. But since one could not send one's own father and mother to the NKVD, Maksim devised a peculiar tactic.

His mother was more or less indifferent to religion. Neither for nor against.

‘Like all good women,’ Maksim would say. ‘A typical fence-sitter.’

‘My God,’ his mother would sigh. ‘Aren’t you ashamed?’ But Father Rudnev was fairly religious and liked attending church on Sundays, especially for the solemn services. Then all the churches were closed and Father grumbled with displeasure. The head of the NKVD’s 13th Department began engaging Father in religious debates:

‘Father, what is God?’

Father tried to explain, but it came out unconvincing.

‘And what is the Son of God?’

Again Father floundered, and the commissar, like an inquisitor, pressed on:

‘Why does “Gospel” literally mean “Good News”? What is this good news?’

Father awkwardly wiped his fogged pince-nez while Maksim relentlessly continued his interrogation:

‘Why is Jesus Christ called the Saviour?’ Then, as if giving exam hints, he prompted:

‘What does He save from? Come on! The Gospels describe how Jesus healed people... How can you, a gynaecologist, not know that? It’s practically your speciality... Or have you never read the Gospels?’ [79]

Father felt like a schoolboy, and the State Security Commissar shook his head in reproach:

‘How can you, a university-educated man, believe in something you don’t understand? You walk around crossing yourself, bowing - and you don’t even know what for?!’

Having completely flustered his father, Maksim, like a true Jesuit, condescended to explain:

‘From the point of view of dialectical materialism, “God” is a collective term for the highest laws of nature as they relate to man. And the man who first formulated those laws is called the Son of God.’ Papa Innokenty’s disciple raised his finger instructively. ‘Where people disobey these laws - that is, disobey God - a complex of social diseases arises, which for simplicity’s sake, as the antithesis of God, is called the devil. Christ’s teaching - the Gospel - shows the path to salvation from these social diseases. That’s why the teaching is called the Good News and Christ the Saviour. Clear?’

From that point on, whenever a dispute arose, the Doctor of Social Sciences would immediately take refuge behind the Bible, insisting that every parable had its hidden meaning. It had to be admitted that he knew the Bible by heart and now mocked his father:

‘Isn’t it written in the Bible: they have eyes, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not. That’s you all over. But the Bible also speaks of the keys to knowledge...’

Boris liked to make things concrete:

‘So where are these keys?’

‘Where?’ the commissar smirked. ‘That’s the thing - they’re in the devil’s hands. And the keys are poisoned keys.’ [528]

During the purge, ‘enemies of the people’ were arrested on a collective principle - in batches. Arrest the district Party secretary and not only his wife and relatives but all his assistants, colleagues and friends would follow. Though Father disliked Party members, when they were arrested he would take their side and protest:

‘What on earth are they being arrested for?’

‘Father, look in the Bible,’ advised the State Security Commissar. ‘There’s a parable about tares. Do you know what tares are?’ [90, 516]

‘Weeds,’ said Father.

‘Not just weeds,’ corrected Maksim. ‘They’re considered to be a poisonous, degenerate strain of wheat. And the Gospel says that at the end of the age, these tares will be uprooted. The end of the age is the end of a historical cycle, whose boundary is revolution. So we’re cleansing - uprooting those very tares.’

‘But why arrest all their colleagues and acquaintances?’ protested Father.

‘Because tares always grow together,’ replied Maksim. ‘It’s the party of parties, the union of unions. If one gets to the top, he promotes his own kind from top to bottom. His secretary will be like him, and so will all his friends and associates. That’s why we have to purge them all. The Gospel says it clearly: the sons of the evil one will be cast into the furnace of fire, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. That’s why the Bible is called the Book of Books. It’s a prophetic book. Or did you think those were just empty words?’ Papa Innokenty’s disciple modestly lowered his eyes. ‘I explained all this to Stalin himself. They taught him in seminary but didn’t manage to teach him anything. I explained it to him dialectically. And he said to me: “You, Maksim, are now my Red Cardinal.” I’m something like his spiritual adviser now. I teach him dialectical Christianity.’ [92, 518]

In the end, the purge turned into a kind of invisible civil war. Across the entire Land of the Soviets, mass arrests and executions swept through the population. The whole world held its breath, following the unbelievable outcomes of the Moscow Trials.

And Stalin’s Red Cardinal had found an old Chaliapin record somewhere and was winding up his gramophone in his room.

‘With all my soul I loved a maiden,’ sang the famous bass, ‘For her, I’d give up my life...’

Maksim rocked back and forth in his chair, sipping vodka from his favourite cup shaped like a human skull.

‘With turquoise I’ll adorn the parlour,’ came the voice from the gramophone, ‘A golden bed I shall place...’

The Red Cardinal watched his own shadow swaying on the wall.

‘I shall decorate it like a picture,’ drifted through the half-open door to Boris, ‘And I’ll give it all for love...’

Maksim nodded dully to the rhythm of the song. Outside, the old walnut rustled its leaves.

‘But if doubt should creep into my heart,’ Chaliapin sang, ‘That my beauty is untrue...’

‘Then as punishment the world shall shudder,’ Maksim joined in with a goatish baritone, ‘And even sa-a-atan shall be aghast...’

Gunshots rang out from the older brother’s room. The younger one opened the door slightly. The Red Cardinal was rocking in his chair, shooting his own shadow with a pistol.

Caught beneath the wheels of the Great Purge was also Fedka the Cross-Eyed, once the most notorious thug in the Petrovskiy Park district. The very same Fedka, after fights with whom Maksim had prayed to God with foolish pleas to make him big and strong.

When Fedka the Cross-Eyed grew up, he turned from street hooligan into a street robber. Then he specialised in armed bank heists. To rid himself of his squint, he gouged out his own misaligned eye with a rusty nail and replaced it with a glass one. From then on, he was known as Fedka Eye-Gouger. [95, 521]

For several years, Fedka Eye-Gouger ruled the criminal underworld of Moscow and was famed for his elusiveness. But one of his many wives turned him in to the criminal police. In her statement, she explained that in the marital bed Fedka would leap on her each time with a loaded revolver, staging a scene that was part rape, part robbery. Otherwise, he was totally impotent and could do nothing. As a result, four wives had already run away from him. The fifth got so fed up that she decided to get rid of him with the help of the police. Fedka Eye-Gouger was arrested and exiled to Siberia.

On hearing the news from the neighbours, Boris, as usual, asked Maksim for clarification:

‘Hey, they say your pal just got swept up.’

‘Who?’

‘Fedka the Cross-Eyed.’

‘Well, if he got swept up, then it was deserved.’

‘Deserved how?’

‘Stalin complex.’

‘What’s that?’

‘Well, Stalin too dabbled in banditry in his youth. Both of his wives also died under rather strange circumstances. Plus, Fedka was cross-eyed, and Stalin had a withered hand. But it all comes from the same root.’

‘Careful, or with talk like that they’ll sweep you up too,’ Boris warned.

But Stalin’s Red Cardinal kept raving:

‘Same psychodynamics - the leader complex. From the perspective of higher sociology, all true leaders are potential criminals. And all true criminals are potential leaders.’

‘Typical raving nonsense,’ said Boris.

‘Yes, it’s the raving of an idiot,’ agreed Stalin’s secret advisor. ‘But that idiot’s name was Karl Marx. And that raving is the core law of Marxist dialectics - the unity and conflict of opposites.’ [81]

After Fedka Eye-Gouger, they swept up his brother Ivan Strannik, the Futurist poet who wrote under the pseudonym Mort - meaning “death” in Latin. When he was arrested, he pulled out a little suitcase from under the bed, clearly packed in advance for the occasion and smiled kindly:

‘You think I’ll be worse off there than here? No, I’ll be better off there than here. That’s our strength and your powerlessness.’

When the NKVD agent opened the poet’s suitcase, it contained a copy of Baudelaire’s *The Flowers of Evil* and a stock of narcotics.

‘It’s my medicine,’ the Futurist explained. ‘I can’t live without it.’

‘Don’t worry,’ said the agent, ‘we’ll cure you.’

Once, the God-seeker Berdyaev preached about fraternity in the Antichrist and the resulting kingdom of the prince of this world. Now that kingdom was a stinking room where, in the corner, his paralysed sister-in-Antichrist lay bedridden and soiled herself.

‘Listen,’ said the Futurist, ‘she used to be a decorated Chekist. Who’ll empty her chamber pot now?’

‘Don’t worry,’ said the NKVD agent, ‘we’ll cure her too.’

That same night, Ivan Mort’s friends were also swept up - those who had helped him “love” his nymphomaniac wife: the jokey Armenian with his Armenian humour and the jolly monk who had once been expelled from the monastery for some sins. The amorous Chekist-nymphomaniac, deprived of all her lovers, soon went mad from lack of affection and was taken away too.

The younger Ivan Strannik had already fled from that house long ago, the house over which reigned the kingdom of the prince of this world. He left his special school for gifted children and joined the vagrant underclass. He made a living playing spoons at markets and

occasionally wrote poems for soft-hearted market women, signing them with his new pseudonym - Ivan Delyagin.

Irina's parents, with whom Olga had once been a lodger, were also arrested. It was said her mother was detained because her first husband, Koryakovich, had been a Menshevik. Though she was now on her fourth husband - a staunch Bolshevik with a Party card - this fourth husband was swept up too. [616]

'Hey Max, why'd they take that Bolshevik then?' Boris asked.

'According to the first law of Marxism,' Maksim muttered. 'Unity of opposites.'

'And why'd they take Ivan Strannik?'

'For Trotskyism and permanent revolution.'

'What's that supposed to mean?'

The State Security Commissar yawned and lazily explained that from the standpoint of higher sociology, it was simply a case of a masochist with a pathological need to suffer, to be humiliated and insulted, to be beaten. His Chekist wife was simply a sadist. Such people are always drawn to each other. And all revolutions are full of them - where sadists seek opportunities to torment others and masochists seek to be tormented.

But even after the revolution, these people continue the same behaviour - permanent revolution, that is, anarchy and nihilism, Berdyaev's very own 'Nothing, which nullifies'. Allegedly, Comrade Trotsky was well aware of this. He recruited his followers not by political criteria but by psychobiological ones.

Clinically speaking, they are mentally disturbed psychopaths. But on the one hand, not so insane as to be institutionalised. On the other hand, their name is legion and there are so many of them that there would not be enough asylums to contain them all. And yet they will rage until they are destroyed. In Freud's terms, this is called the self-destruction complex.

'So,' said Boris, 'you're saying it's not you destroying them, it's them destroying themselves. Right?'

'Of course,' nodded Maksim. 'That's why Ivan Strannik chose the pseudonym Mort - death.'

Then the State Security Commissar went on to argue that for people like Ivan Mort, freedom is harmful, that sooner or later the Futurist would die from drugs or kill himself, as the Futurist leader Mayakovsky had done. So, in order to protect such Futurists from themselves, they were now sent to Siberia, where they would be cured through labour - according to the method of God-seeker Lev Tolstoy.

By the way, since for such people freedom is harmful - not ordinary freedom, but a special, metaphysical kind - that is why Berdyaev calls this metaphysical freedom a tragic freedom, rooted in the 'Nothing which nullifies'.

On the back page of *Evening Moscow*, a letter from Irina Koryakovich appeared, in which she publicly renounced her parents and even announced that she was changing her surname.

‘What a cow,’ said Boris, reading the *Evening Edition*. ‘Disowning her own parents.’

But the head of the NKVD’s 13th Department disagreed, insisting that from the standpoint of higher sociology, this was a typical devil’s trick: to do everything in the dark, behind one’s back and in reverse.

‘How so?’ asked Boris.

‘Very simply,’ said Maksim. ‘They weren’t her real parents.’

‘Then who were they?’

‘She was adopted. But this had been kept from her. But that’s nothing,’ Maksim smirked. ‘As for the Futurist Mort - his son really was conceived futuristically, by artificial insemination. That is, as they say, made with a finger.’

‘And how do you know that?’

‘Quite easily. When necessary, the 13th Department requests blood group data from clinics for particular parents and their children. Then we compare the results. Just as they do in court when disputed paternity has to be established.’

‘But why make children with a finger?’

‘Simple. To reduce the risk of bad heredity, which passes down just like syphilis. Normal people, of course, know nothing of this and would never even suspect it. But for the legionaries, it’s a complex problem. Because the keys to it lie in the devil’s hands. And those keys - they are poisoned keys.’

Spouting this nonsense, the State Security Commissar insisted it was higher sociology. Boris, after listening to this drivel, merely waved his hand and went to bed.

Among them was the literary critic Zavalyukhin with the crooked finger, who was related to the Menshevik suicide Zavalyshin. Though Zavalyukhin had discreetly altered his passport surname, it did him no good. He was accused not only of having a crooked finger but a crooked soul - of secretly praising rotten, decadent art and even preaching Berdyaev’s philosophy. [525]

The 13th Department began probing him too. What kind of strange surname is this from the perspective of semantic philosophy - Zavalyukhin-Zavalyshin? Or perhaps you were given this name because your ancestors were already zavaly - refuse, rubbish, rot? The human refuse we are now sweeping away. And so on and so forth.

Eventually, Olga’s parents were also arrested. They were charged under Article 58, Clauses 10 and 11 - involvement in anti-Soviet organisations. It turned out that while living in Berezovka near Moscow, they had, out of boredom, assembled a little circle of spiritualist enthusiasts from among old Bolsheviks. They would sit around spinning tables and

summoning spirits, all under the cover of their Party membership cards. Though the old Bolshevik Dora Mazurkina defended herself by claiming she summoned only the spirit of Lenin, to consult with him on current political matters, it did not help. Now, even communion with Lenin's spirit was deemed an anti-Soviet act.

Moreover, on the neighbouring dacha of Madame Popkova, they had created a kind of humanitarian and slightly conspiratorial little circle, where young people, unable to find happiness through ordinary means, searched for it through theosophy - that is, the God-wisdom of Madame Blavatsky. But this God-wisdom was now classified as a counter-revolutionary underground, where Satan was getting cosy with the Antichrist.

The 13th Department began interrogating these God-wise folk too. Madame Popkova had a large black birthmark on her cheek, about the size of a good prune and covered in dark fuzz. They seized on that too.

'What is that mark? Where did it come from? Why?'

'Ah, you say it's nothing. But in the occult books we confiscated from you old Bolsheviks, it says it's not just a mark. It's the devil's seal or a witch's mark - a sign of a pact with the devil. So then, explain what it is.'

'Ah, you say it's nothing, just coincidence. But why, as old Bolsheviks, were you keeping those occult books?'

'Hmm, hmm... Madame Popkova's husband was from a priestly family - you can even tell by the surname. But then he became a Sabbatarian sectarian. A convert. By the way, Madame Popkova - that's her husband's name. What's her own nationality? Aha, a mixed marriage. As your Berdyaev said, that's a union of Satan and the Antichrist. Isn't that so? And even the devil's seal on her cheek. From an occult point of view, very interesting. That's why you God-wise types made her the priestess of your secret cult. Ah, you may be God-wise, but we are also learned men. All clear. Come on now, you old witch, sign the protocol!'

'Comrade investigator, but...'

'What? A goose is no comrade to a pig!'

'Citizen investigator, but we fought for the revolution...'

'And look what you got for it. Sign!'

'But...'

'No buts. After all, your God-wise Berdyaev taught that sometimes it's good to follow the path of evil, because it leads to the highest good. Now do you see where that led you? Sign!'

'Citizen investigator, but these organisations are fictitious - this stuff about anti-Soviet conspiracies. It's not true...'

‘Eh, don’t you see, you old witch, that this untruth is better for you than the truth? Because for the truth - for all your sins - you’d be shot. But for this half-truth, we’ll only give you ten years in Siberia. Now sign!’

Thus State Security Commissar Maksim Rudnev explained the arrest of his mother-in-law - the Martian - and his father-in-law - the cherub. And he insisted that of course he didn’t concern himself with such trifles personally and, like Pilate, washed his hands of it.

But Boris suspected that Maksim, under the pretext of the “Blue Star” affair, was settling some private scores - exterminating all the relatives and acquaintances of his dead, beautiful wife, that silent angel who had led him beyond good and evil, beyond life and death.

Frankly, even that might have been understandable. But the matter soon became even more tangled.

While the 13th Department of the NKVD was conducting searches in the homes of the enemies of the people, Boris occasionally searched the room of the head of the 13th Department - simply out of curiosity. One day, he stumbled upon a grey folder, glanced inside and felt a flicker of fear. It was a file concerning Stalin himself - or more precisely, his wife. [527]

Stalin’s second wife, Nadezhda Alliluyeva, had also been a beauty and it was said Stalin had loved her deeply. She too had died under mysterious circumstances. Some said she committed suicide; others claimed Stalin had killed her.

The grey folder contained all sorts of details. It turned out that the strange surname Alliluyeva - odd for Stalin’s wife - came from her priestly ancestors. A note stated that Stalin’s wife’s brother, Pavel Alliluyev, had married the daughter of a priest - and that during the Soviet era.

‘Strange,’ thought Boris. ‘Stalin himself studied to be a priest. And Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka, the naked sword of the revolution, was also going to be a Catholic priest. And what did they become? And now these very Stalin and Dzerzhinsky are driving all the priests into Siberia. It really does start to look like something from Marxist dialectics - the unity and conflict of opposites.’ [106, 128, 543]

The grey folder also mentioned another brother of Stalin’s wife, Fyodor Alliluyev, who was never spoken of publicly. The reason being simple: Fyodor Alliluyev had gone mad during the Civil War.

Next came Stalin’s wife’s older sister, Anna Alliluyeva. In her youth she had studied at the Petersburg Institute of Psychoneurology, intending to become a psychiatrist. But she never completed her studies, having herself been diagnosed with mental illness - schizophrenia. Several of Olga Alliluyeva’s maternal aunts also suffered from schizophrenia. [214]

Stalin’s father-in-law, Sergei Alliluyev and his wife Olga had been professional revolutionaries. But now it was whispered around Moscow that they too had been arrested as enemies of the people. And everyone understood clearly that no one could arrest Stalin’s in-laws except by Stalin’s own order.

Soon after, Pavel Alliluyev, brother of Stalin's beloved wife, was arrested. Then they swept up Stanislav Redens, a senior NKVD officer. From the Main Directorate of the NKVD - straight to the basement - and a bullet to the back of the head. But everyone knew Redens was the husband of Anna Alliluyeva, Stalin's sister-in-law.

So Stalin not only sent his beloved wife's father, mother and brother to the camps, but even liquidated his brother-in-law!

The grey folder noted that after the death of his beloved wife, Stalin had taken great offence at the book she had been reading before her death. It was the fashionable novel *The Green Hat* by Michael Arlen.

Also included was an expert report from the 13th Department: the novel ends with suicide due to syphilis. In Maksim's handwriting, a note read: 'The legionaries fear the very word "legionisation" so much that, when speaking of it, they usually blame innocent syphilis. A typical phenomenon.' [85, 212, 602]

'Strange,' thought Boris, leafing through the grey folder, 'Maksim was recently ranting about some illness passed down like syphilis, only worse. And they said the same thing about Lenin - that he had syphilis. But what is this "legionisation"? And who are these "legionaries"? Another damned code from that damned 13th Department.'

Next in the folder came the list of Kremlin widows.

Wife of the first Marxist Plekhanov - Rosa Markovna. Wife of Chicherin - another biblical Rosa of some kind. Wife of Bukharin - Esther Gursvich. Wife of Kamenev - Olga Davidovna, younger sister of Trotsky. Wife of the revolutionary hero Shchors - Maria Khaikina.

And the list was long. Following was the list of Kremlin dames:

Wife of Defence Commissar Voroshilov - Yekaterina Davidovna. Wife of Foreign Commissar Molotov - Madame Zhemchuzhina-Perelman. Wife of Railways Commissar Andreev - Dora Moiseyevna Khazan. And finally, Stalin's third - though unofficial - wife: Rosa Kaganovich.

A note added that she was either the sister or niece of Heavy Industry Commissar Lazar Kaganovich, but this was hard to determine, as she was adopted and it was a family secret.

'Strange,' thought Boris. 'Is there some sort of marriage bureau in the Kremlin for matching Soviet leaders with Jewish wives? And why is the 13th Department interested in this?'

'First, all those idiotic biblical ravings that the devil is the prince of this world. Then Berdyaev's God-seeking drivel about Satan, the Antichrist and fraternity in the Antichrist leading to the kingdom of the prince of this world. But why does the 13th Department agree that Satan and the Antichrist not only exist but even get married?! And why these strange lists of biblical personnel among Kremlin wives?! Half of them are already widows. And recently they swept up Molotov's wife too. There's a pattern here. But what kind?'

The intellectual trust of Professor Rudnev had done its job thoroughly. They hadn't even spared Stalin's first wife, Yekaterina Svanidze, long deceased. Stalin's official biography said she was a poor peasant girl. But the grey folder said that her brother, Alexander Svanidze, had married Maria Korona, from a wealthy Sephardic Jewish family. Both were well-educated abroad and Alexander later held a high post in the Soviet government. Hardly the background of a poor peasant. [114, 529]

But that wasn't the point. The point was that all Moscow knew that Stalin's first wife's brother had recently been arrested as an enemy of the people. Along with him, they swept up not only his wife Maria Korona but also their son Dzhonik. Poor Dzhonik had suffered since childhood from congenital neurasthenia and was constantly treated in a psychoneurological dispensary.

Next they arrested Alexander Svanidze's sister Mariko - that is, Stalin's first wife's sister. Then they swept up Maria Korona's brother as well. But every Muscovite understood: no one would dare arrest Stalin's relatives without Stalin's direct order.

Boris closed the ominous folder. Stalin had not only liquidated the entire family of his beloved second wife, but had eradicated every last relative of his first wife.

And wasn't that exactly what Maksim had done to Olga? Was Maksim blindly following in Stalin's footsteps? Or was it the other way round? Could it be that Stalin was following the lead of his mad secret advisor?

But what kind of devilry was this?

Searching for an answer, Boris turned the grey folder over. On the cover, where the title usually stood, was written: *Case of the Prince of This World*. [526]

On the reverse, where Maksim liked to scribble conclusions, it read:

'And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgement: ...of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged.'

Scrawled diagonally in red ink: 'Sentence confirmed. Final and not subject to appeal.'
And below, the signature of USSR State Security Commissar Maksim Rudnev.

But if Maksim was merely confirming the sentence... Then who had passed judgement in the case of the prince of this world?

Chapter 7. The Serpent and the Sword [552]

And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword... And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

Revelation of St John the Divine, 19:15; 20:2

The fiercer the Great Purge became, the more frequently Boris searched the office of the head of the 13th Department of the NKVD, trying to unravel the mysteries of this enigmatic purge. On Maksim's desk there were always clippings from the international press, which wrote extensively about the witch-hunt in the USSR, expressing outrage-yet none of them understood a thing.

During one such search, Boris came across a yellow folder marked: "Case No. 69/PL - Lords of the Human Soul".

As he leafed through the folder, Boris recalled the case of the 'Blue Star' and Maksim's despondent cry of the soul: "Ah, if only I'd known this earlier! So much grief and misfortune - and all because I didn't know." That had been after Maksim discovered that his dead, beautiful wife, although she had looked like a quiet angel, had in fact turned out to be some kind of half-breed - half angel and half Martian, or perhaps a hybrid of Satan and the Antichrist.

It was then that Maksim began to wonder: why is so little written about this in the press? Why do the writers and poets remain silent? Why do they not fulfil their civic duty - to warn their fellow citizens of the danger posed by Satan and the Antichrist? And when they do write, why do they always leave something unsaid? It was then that Maksim ordered his NKVD Scientific Research Institute to carry out a special investigation into the matter.

Writers and poets had long been called lords of the human soul. In Soviet times they were called engineers of the human soul. The yellow folder contained the results of the investigation into these lords of the human soul.

The think tank headed by Professor Rudnev began its investigation with the poets. And to lay a solid historical foundation, as befitted a serious academic study, it all began with references to ancient authorities. These authorities said the following.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, the greatest mind of the classical world, reflecting on the relationship between intellect and madness, wrote that genius and insanity most frequently and vividly occur in poets.

The philosopher Democritus, one of the founders of materialism, stated plainly that he did not consider a man in sound mind to be a real poet.

And the renowned philosopher Plato, one of the founders of objective idealism, in his book *The Republic*, made this a precondition for building a communist society: to banish all poets beyond the borders of that state.

‘Poor poets!’ thought Boris.

To appear objective, the experts of the 13th Department added the note that the greatest Russian poet, Pushkin, was an exception to this rule: he was a pure genius, a solar genius - in other words, an entirely normal person. But, following the advice of the ancient philosophers, the 13th Department held that poetry as such was essentially a sign of abnormality and that poets must be approached with caution.

‘So who is right: the philosophers or the poets?’ thought Boris. All of it seemed strange, tangled and incomprehensible.

What followed, however, resembled a clever Jewish anecdote. In such anecdotes, when there is a need to solve some difficult and delicate problem, one need only find a clever Jew who will instantly and deftly resolve everything.

So did the 13th Department of the NKVD. To resolve the tangled business of the lords of the human soul, Professor Rudnev’s brain trust enlisted not just one clever Jew but three, drawn from among the clever Jews of the past. And this was even explained. Allegedly, it was because the roots of the matter lay in the Bible and the teachings of the apostles. And that, naturally, was something of a Jewish profession. These three clever Jews, each in his own way, as it were, continued the line of the biblical apostles.

The first apostle of the 13th Department was Professor Lombroso, the father of scientific criminology, a famous psychiatrist who managed asylums, where he compiled his observations. He became famous chiefly for his theory that genius is closely linked with degeneration - or, put more simply, with hereditary decline - which, in turn, is closely connected to mental illness. [116, 264, 315, 531, 663]

Taking this line of reasoning further, Professor Lombroso wrote an academic work entitled *Political Crimes and Criminals*, in which, on the basis of rich empirical material, he demonstrated that the majority of political conspirators and revolutionaries, if they lose, end up on the scaffold, the gallows or before a firing squad and if they win, become leaders, dictators, premiers or presidents - that is, princes of this world. But in the majority of cases, they are in principle still the same mentally ill degenerates and maniacs.

What drives them is not a love of liberty, equality or fraternity, which they constantly proclaim, but a maniacal, pathological lust for power, characteristic of a certain category of degenerates. This is a specific power complex, for which there exists a specific formula. And if one knows this formula, then...

Naturally, the 13th Department of the NKVD was fascinated by all this - especially the mysterious formula of power. After all, Professor Lombroso was considered the father of scientific criminology. [322]

The second apostle of the 13th Department was Lombroso’s pupil, Dr Nordau-Suedfeld, who caused a sensation with his book *Degeneration*, in which he picked apart all the lords of the human soul of the 19th century: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Tolstoy, Zola, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Ibsen and so on - and came to the melancholy conclusion that, from a medical point of view, they were all obvious degenerates and mentally ill. This discovery visibly

perturbed Dr Nordau. But the lords of the soul, though mad, sat peacefully on their pedestals. [117, 316, 532, 664]

The third apostle of the 13th Department was the famous Dr Freud, father of psychoanalysis, who proved that mental illness is generally connected to sexual perversion - and vice versa. Thus, by knowing one, one can infer the other. [118, 533]

In other words, the brilliant Freud claimed that the devil of degeneration hides in two places - in a man's head and in his trousers. But it is not so easy to look into a man's head. Peering into his trousers, however, is much simpler. And then one can judge what is going on in his head. And this was precisely what the specialists of the 13th Department of the NKVD required.

For that way, all political criminals could be rounded up. 'Right then, uncle, drop your trousers!' Simple - and brilliant. The only snag being that almost all geniuses would be caught in that trap.

To avoid mistakes, the 13th Department of the NKVD brought in a fourth clever Jew as a witness. This was the apostle of existentialist philosophy, Kierkegaard, a hunchbacked miserabilist who claimed that ever since the invention of the printing press, the devil had made his home in printer's ink. And since, in our day, the press is a kind of sixth great power that in some sense rules over the world, it is now impossible to preach Christianity - they simply will not print you. [119, 317, 534, 665]

Strangely enough, the famous French writer André Gide fully agrees with Kierkegaard, stating quite seriously that there is no book which has been written without the help of the devil.

A note from the specialists of the 13th Department: 'Of course, he's a pederast. But we understand that symbolism too.'

With such a solid academic foundation established, Professor Rudnev's brain trust began testing these theories on practical examples. First, they took down the trousers of the great humanist Lev Tolstoy - the renowned seeker after God, who for some reason was excommunicated from the Church in disgrace; the eminent count, whom Lenin himself once called the mirror of the Russian revolution.

To avoid misunderstandings, the word was given to Tolstoy himself. In his personal diary of 29 November 1851, he wrote the following: 'I have never loved a woman... But I have often fallen in love with men... I fell in love with a man before I knew what pederasty was... For instance, Dyakov - I wanted to smother him with kisses and weep.'

In his *Confession*, Tolstoy wrote: 'I felt that I was not entirely sound of mind.'

At the same time, the other great Russian writer - Dostoevsky - wrote: 'About Lev Tolstoy... Word is, he has quite lost his mind.'

To this Tolstoy replied that Dostoevsky was himself mad, and all his characters too. What he meant, of course, was not stomach ailments but mental illness.

‘Good Lord,’ thought Boris, ‘what a charming exchange of pleasantries between geniuses!’

To resolve the dispute, the 13th Department cited the famous psychiatrist Rossolimo, who had treated Tolstoy and diagnosed him thus: ‘Degenerative dual constitution: paranoid and hysterical, with predominance of the former.’ [120, 330, 353, 535, 677]

And to spare Tolstoy the indignity, the professors of the 13th Department dug up some Freudian psychoanalysts who, through various conjuring tricks, calculated that in Dostoevsky’s life and work there were also certain ‘tendencies of a homosexual nature’. Thus Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were reconciled: both were right - both were ill.

The yellow folder noted that in his youth Dostoevsky had been a member of the revolutionary Petrashevsky Circle, for which he was sentenced to death. This was later commuted to penal servitude, where he was treated by the Tolstoyan method that preached ‘rehabilitation through labour’. After that Dostoevsky was indeed cured of his former revolutionary views and became a reactionary writer. Later, in *The Possessed*, he wrote of his former Petrashevsky comrades that they were a ‘perverse and anti-government society of thirteen men’. [103, 130, 545]

‘Strange,’ thought Boris, ‘Dostoevsky makes some cryptic hints about the number thirteen. And Tolstoy, as if on cue, fathered thirteen children. And now they’re being hunted by the 13th Department of the NKVD. What is going on?’

Following Count Tolstoy, they took down the trousers of the great proletarian writer Maksim Gorky. This storm petrel of the revolution had once written that eccentrics embellish life. But he himself was quite an eccentric. At the age of nineteen he attempted suicide. Then he married - and soon divorced. His biological child remained with his wife, while Gorky took in an adopted child. And here he truly outdid himself.

Usually, people try to adopt a younger child. But Gorky, then thirty-five, adopted a nineteen-year-old youth. Now that was eccentric! But that was not all. This adopted son was one Zinovy Sverdlov, the biological brother of Yakov Sverdlov, who later, after the revolution, became Chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee - that is, head of the Soviet state! [121, 122, 536, 537]

So the 13th Department began to take issue with Gorky. Why did he want not just a boy, but a nineteen-year-old boy? And not just any boy, but a Jewish one? And the brother of a die-hard revolutionary, no less? And so on.

As he turned the pages of the yellow folder, Boris remembered the case of the Kremlin doctors-poisoners. During the infamous Moscow trials, Doctor Levin had publicly confessed, in the presence of the foreign press, that Gorky and his son - not the adopted one, but his biological son - had been quietly poisoned on the orders of the NKVD chief Herschel Yagoda. Yes, but who had given the order to Herschel? And why?

It was all strange. After all, the Great Purge had begun after Kirov's assassination in Leningrad. And afterwards, they said that in Leningrad, overnight, they had re-arrested all the pederasts. Which meant that they had already been under special surveillance - except for the ballet dancers. Otherwise Leningrad would have been left without ballet. Besides, dancers did

not work with their heads but with their legs. And so the NKVD did not care what was going on in their heads. But writers did not work with their legs - they worked with their heads...

And one more strange thing. After the revolution, among the various revolutionary freedoms, full freedom was granted to pederasts. For the first time in the entire history of Russia, pederasty was removed from the new Soviet criminal code. And the yellow folder underlined that a similar strange thing had happened in France after the Great French Revolution. But shortly before the start of the Great Purge, freedom for pederasts came to an end - pederasty was reintroduced into the criminal code.

These were facts. And facts, as Comrade Stalin said, are stubborn things. But what was concealed behind these facts?

The more Boris peered into the secrets of the 13th Department, the less he understood. He had previously thought that Maksim had gone slightly mad. But now that madman had a whole think tank - something like a madhouse trust. Before, there had been the conspiracy of the Kremlin doctors-poisoners. But now the yellow folder spoke of some kind of conspiracy of psychiatrist-doctors.

All these conspiracies began to bore Boris. So he snapped shut the case on the lords of the human soul and went to play volleyball.

One evening, while Maksim was at home, Boris found on his table a book on the history of the medieval Inquisition, which he was evidently using as a reference for improving the operations of the NKVD. The book stated that during the European witch hunts, nine million witches and sorcerers had been sent to the next world.

‘Good grief!’ said Boris. ‘Nine million?’

‘That’s what the devil’s advocates claim,’ countered the doctor of social sciences. ‘And they deliberately exaggerate. More reliable sources say thirty thousand. That’s approximately over three hundred years. So about one hundred people per year - across the whole of Europe. From a criminal statistical point of view, that’s not so much.’

‘Yes, but still. Just like that - to the stake.’

‘No, it’s not quite like that. The devil’s advocates simply keep quiet about the fact that in almost every case, serious crimes preceded it - criminal or political. For similar offences in today’s Europe, the death sentence is still issued - and for no less. And if you take a closer look, they are the same types of people whom the Inquisition liquidated as witches and warlocks. The only difference is in terminology. That’s all.’

‘It’s all nonsense,’ said the student. ‘Old wives’ tales.’

‘Nonsense... When the Great French Revolution broke out, more than a million people were guillotined over three years. In most cases, they were completely innocent. And later it was revealed that all the leaders of that revolution turned out to be the very sort of people who used to be called witches and warlocks. So what’s better: if in three years they had liquidated

three hundred of these witches and warlocks, including all the leaders of the revolution, or one million innocent victims of the guillotine? The same story applies to the Soviet revolution.'

'Fine,' said Boris, 'suppose that's so. But why is this so little known?'

'Because it's known by too many people. But they will either remain silent - or deny everything. That's why it says in the Gospel: "My name is Legion." Ninety percent of that legion are more or less harmless people. As it were, saints. But the remaining ten percent of the legion commit ninety percent of the crimes of mankind. These are the sinners, so to speak. But if you name the legion, all of them - saints and sinners alike - will raise such an uproar... Better not to say it at all.' The state security commissar waved his hand. 'In short, it's a complicated problem. There are saintly sinners - and sinful saints. And the combinations are as many as in a kaleidoscope. I kept trying to explain it to Stalin. And he says, "Ship 'em all off to Syberia. Saints and sinners both!"' [357, 681]

At one point, Maksim let slip that the plans of the Great Purge envisaged the liquidation or isolation of five percent of the USSR's population. With a population of 180 million, that meant nine million. The purge was planned to last three years. So in three years, they were to catch up with - and surpass - what had taken the medieval Inquisition three hundred years.

Then the doctor of social sciences added:

'All the books say five percent. But I told Stalin it could be reduced to four percent. See - I'm doing a kindness.' With the eyes of a fanatic, he stared into the dark night beyond the window. 'Dostoevsky described revolutionaries in *The Possessed*. He predicted that Russia would fall ill with a terrible disease. He knew what kind of disease it was. And I know. Then all the ulcers, all the miasmas, all the filth, all these demons will perish, will enter into swine and hurl themselves into the abyss... And then Mother Russia, having passed through illness, young and healthy, will sit once more at the feet of the Saviour... I am the servant of God... Or the scourge of God and I am helping this historical process. But no one understands it...'

Meanwhile, a solar eclipse was drawing over the Land of the Soviets. The paradise promised by the revolution was turning ever more into a hell. The purge swept across the land and a black sun hung in the sky.

When Lenin had been preparing the revolution, he had decried the brutalities of the Tsarist government and campaigned for the abolition of the death penalty in future Russia. But once the Bolsheviks came to power, the Cheka shot more people in the first three years than the entire Romanov dynasty had done in three centuries.

Now it was said that, in connection with the purge, a new decree had been issued by the Supreme Soviet lowering the age of criminal responsibility from eighteen to fourteen, or even twelve - up to and including the death penalty. So instead of abolishing capital punishment, it had now been extended even to children. [125, 540]

NKVD commissions visited labour homes and juvenile correctional colonies for underage offenders. They reviewed case files. Compiled lists. Then, based on those lists, mass executions of minors began. It was said that by night, the bodies of the executed were carted to the city rubbish dump, deep pits were dug, the corpses dumped in like carrion, covered

with quicklime, and then heaped with rubbish to keep stray dogs from digging them up. This, apparently, was meant to emphasise: behold, we are burying human refuse. [538]

These were the fruits of the work of the NKVD's Scientific Research Institute, headed by Doctor of Social Sciences Maksim Rudnev. At home, Maksim would justify himself:

'What are you supposed to do with a fourteen-year-old boy who's already committed three murders? It used to be thought that such a killer was a victim of social conditions, someone who could be easily rehabilitated if those conditions were changed. But practice showed that social conditions only play some role in the case of minor crimes. For serious repeat offenders, the causes are usually found not in the environment, but inside the person - in his psyche. And such a person cannot be reformed. He can only be isolated. But even in isolation, in a labour colony or camp, the end result is always the same: either he kills someone, or he is killed. So they decided not to bother with such cases, but simply to liquidate them.'

In Tsarist times, a distinction was made between political and criminal offenders. Now, everyone was lumped together and political prisoners were thrown in with thieves and bandits. Moreover, political prisoners were treated worse than common criminals.

Maksim explained it like this:

'From a scientific point of view, every type of crime corresponds, in principle, to a particular psychological complex. Take arsonists, for example. This corresponds to what is known in psychiatry as pyromania - an unhealthy obsession with fire that leads to setting things alight. A primitive person goes and burns down a house. But a rotten intellectual does the same in his mind - he sets society, the state, ablaze, stirs up revolutionary fires. But technically, for psychiatrists, both are pyromaniacs. And which is worse: the one who sets a house on fire, or the one who sets fire to an entire country? That is why such intellectuals are now treated with even less ceremony than common criminals.'

Then the doctor of social sciences went on to argue that a similar psychological correlation exists between bandits and revolutionaries. That is why both Stalin and Piłsudski, in their political careers, did not shy away from ordinary banditry, calling it expropriation for the needs of the revolution.

'We've had our fill of revolutions,' he said. 'Now we are men of science. That's why we now throw bandits and revolutionaries into the same pit.'

And the NKVD gained another profession: telemechanics, that is, back-room specialists. [127, 542]

During interrogation, arrested enemies of the people would fall into the hands of these telemechanics, who would run them through the methods of physical influence, after which they would confess to being counter-revolutionaries, foreign spies, terrorists, wreckers and saboteurs.

'But it's all made up!' protested his father.

‘Of course it’s made up,’ Maksim agreed. ‘We provide the lists with pre-written verdicts. The investigators don’t know anything else. Their job is to extract formal confessions. In anything at all. By any means necessary.’

‘But what are these people guilty of?’

‘They belong to the class from which 90 percent of all evils and misfortunes of the human race originate. That includes nearly all revolutionaries, spies, terrorists, wreckers and saboteurs. We simply do not wait until they act - we liquidate them in a pre-emptive fashion. As a class.’

‘And what is this new class?’

‘It’s the same old class once called devils, witches and warlocks,’ replied the doctor of social sciences calmly. ‘They are simply special types of people. With special traits. Such types have always existed, still exist and will exist - even in the new socialist society.’

Previously, the maximum term of imprisonment or exile was ten years. Now that maximum had been increased to twenty-five years. Moreover, certain categories of prisoners were automatically given new sentences once their original term expired, which in practice meant life imprisonment.

‘Why extend their sentences?’ objected the father.

‘Because these people are possessed,’ replied Stalin’s adviser on the affairs of unclean spirits. ‘The very ones Dostoevsky wrote about. Or do you not believe Dostoevsky?’

‘But that’s literature!’

‘No, no, he knew what he was writing about. And so do I. They must be kept in the camps until they’re sixty. So they don’t breed new little demons.’

From night work and alcohol, Maksim had developed puffiness under his eyes and his skin had taken on an unhealthy, earthy-grey hue. Sometimes he would sit, drunk and ashen, muttering:

‘Ah, what devil dragged me into this filthy business?’

As a result of constant alcohol poisoning, Maksim once suffered a violent bout of vomiting. For several hours he was literally retching inside out. To the point of blood. Then he collapsed like an empty sack and moaned:

‘See how revolted I am by all this? To the point of vomiting... That’s why I numb myself with vodka... But it’s a historical necessity... I must...’

His younger brother squinted mockingly:

‘Do you remember, Max, how you once begged God for this very thing - to make you great and strong?’

‘Well, so what?’

‘Don’t forget that in return you offered to shorten your life. Watch it, or you’ll drink yourself into the grave.’

‘I couldn’t care less about my own life,’ said the commissar. ‘So long as I make it to the end.’

But the end of the purge was still far off, and as part of his professional development, Maksim was now reading the memoirs of former Tsarist secret police chiefs. There it was written that the founder of the Cheka, Dzerzhinsky - known as the naked sword of the revolution - had in his youth wanted to become a Catholic priest. And later became a cocaine addict.

‘Is that true?’ asked Boris.

‘Of course,’ said Maksim. ‘According to the law of dialectical materialism on the unity and struggle of opposites.’

‘How so?’

‘Simple. The Inquisition was recruited solely from monks - Franciscans and Dominicans. Because monks understand the problems of sinners better. That’s why they beat each other. That’s precisely the unity and the struggle.’

According to that paradoxical law of Marxist dialectics, the NKVD’s telemechanics mercilessly beat confessions of counter-revolution out of former revolutionaries and pronounced:

‘We’ll teach you to love freedom! You get what you fought for!’

Having devoured the gendarmes’ memoirs, Maksim sat muttering reproachfully:

‘Ah, they didn’t know how to work... If only the Tsar had had a man like me - there’d have been no revolution... I’d have grabbed Lenin by the beard: “You think I don’t know who you are?!”’

Then the red cardinal would begin raving that the first thing he’d do was pull down Lenin’s trousers and conduct a medical examination. As though Lenin were hiding a tail and cloven hooves under his breeches.

Sometimes Maksim spoke with some semblance of reason. But sometimes he babbled sheer nonsense, insisting it was philosophy and higher matters.

Thus Maksim would claim that concentration camps had been invented by none other than the great humanist Lev Tolstoy, who in his philosophising had preached a theory of ‘rehabilitation through labour’. That was why Count Tolstoy wore bast shoes and ostentatiously walked behind a plough. And according to his prescription, millions were now being treated through labour in the camps. [546]

Or Maksim would argue that Siberian shamans, whom he had once studied, were not ordinary people, but special ones. That they held some kind of secret. And that the same secret was possessed by African witch doctors. Then he went so far as to claim that many leaders of the modern world - whatever they might call themselves - were, from a scientific point of view, essentially the same as Siberian shamans and African witch doctors. All of them shared a certain secret formula of power. But if one knew this formula, one could find very weak spots in the mighty of this world. At this point, Stalin's adviser would giggle meaningfully.

Once, Maksim even confessed that he knew the elixir of life mentioned by medieval alchemists. He began listing great men who had lived very long lives, and insisted that all of them had used this elixir. [740]

'And what is it?' asked Boris. 'Boiled frogs and dried cockroaches?'

'No - worse.'

'What then? Pickled vipers?'

'Worse.'

'And have you drunk this elixir?'

'No,' grimaced Maksim. 'I'd rather die when my time comes.'

Then he swore coarsely. As a matter of course, obscenities often slipped into his philosophy as pearls of higher wisdom. But he insisted that even behind these meaningless profanities there lurked some secret meaning known only to witches and warlocks.

Alongside the purge, a wave of black reaction spread across the country. Leftist writers, who had flourished after the revolution, were silenced. Poets seeking new forms in art had their throats stepped on. The Tretyakov Gallery cleared out the cubists, the constructivists and other revolutionaries in painting.

The bloody farce of Yezhovshchina assumed such absurd forms that the following anecdote made the rounds in Moscow. The NKVD arrested a pederast and accused him of counter-revolution. The accused protested: [108]

'I'm just a pederast...'

'We know better who you are,' replied the NKVD. 'Five years for perverting the party line and five for sabotage. That's ten in total.'

Alongside the mass shootings and deportations of enemies of the people, a government decree appeared in the newspapers in summer 1936 banning abortions. People whispered quietly that this had been done to replenish the population losses resulting from the purge. What is a tragedy on the personal level becomes, at the scale of the state, mere statistics.

When quarrels broke out at home with his father, Maksim would defend himself:

‘I’m not responsible for the other departments. Some still work in the old style, arresting according to the principle: he who is not with us is against us. Wait, according to the dialectical law, I’ll get to them too.’

In the third year of the purge, the serpent adorning the sleeves of NKVD personnel began to bite its own tail. The Great Purge, carried out with the iron gauntlets of the NKVD, ended with a purge of the purgatory itself. Now, by night, the ‘Black Raven’ came for yesterday’s leaders of that bloody bacchanalia. Maksim’s family feared for his fate. But he, on the contrary, felt like a fish in water and even boasted: [109, 133, 548]

‘I told you I’d get to them too...’

Suddenly, portraits of even the Iron People’s Commissar Yezhov vanished from the walls. And Maksim, coming home, staggered slightly and rubbed his hands with satisfaction:

‘Bobka, do you kno-o-ow what happened to Comra-a-de Yezhov?’

‘Well?’

‘I had him, um... Liqui-i-idated!’

‘You’re lying.’

‘No, honest to God, I’m not... With these very hands. Look...’ The commissar’s fingers trembled with a fine, nervous twitch.

From constant alcohol poisoning, Maksim completely lost his appetite. At supper he chewed listlessly, not even looking at what was on his plate and mused:

‘Look here... As Pope Innocent said, devils and witches always strive to do people harm. From the point of view of dialectical materialism - they are simply special types of people... And where can such types do harm with impunity? Of course, in the NKVD. Consequently, there must be proportionally more of them in the NKVD than anywhere else... So I calculated accordingly... First, with dirty hands, I cleansed all the filth around us... And then I turned on them themselves... Got it?!’ Pupil of Pope Innocent, he raised an ironic brow: ‘It’s all precisely according to the basic law of dialectical materialism. On the unity and struggle of opposites... As drivers of the historical process... In other words, Comrade Karl Marx: God is in the devil! Well, I’ll show you now where God is and where the devil...’

At this, the head of the 13th Department of the NKVD began loudly regretting that Karl Marx had never fallen into his hands. Had he done so, the 13th Department would have instantly exposed him as a seasoned British spy and saboteur.

‘Lenin was right when he said that England is an international prostitute. And she has always worked against continental Europe. After all, Marx was constantly financed by Friedrich Engels. And where did those funds come from? From Engels’s capital, which was based in England. So, in fact, through a front man - Engels - Karl Marx was constantly financed by the British government. As an ideological saboteur. And where did Karl Marx ultimately flee? He knew where - to England! But we know all those tricks too...’ The state security commissar raised the sleeve bearing the serpent and sword: ‘Ah, if I’d gotten hold of Karl by

the beard: “You think I don’t know why two of your daughters committed suicide?.. And under what circumstances?”’

Rudnev’s father had always criticised Marxism. But now he defended Marx:

‘What do his children have to do with anything?’

Maksim spread his arms in feigned despair:

‘I teach and teach you, and you still don’t know the Gospel?! It’s written plain as day: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: ye shall know them by their fruits.”’

His father fiddled uncomfortably with his pince-nez, while the commissar amused himself:

‘What comes next? Don’t know that either?! Let me remind you: “Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit: a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Just look - Comrade Trotsky’s daughter also committed suicide. And not in an NKVD basement, but in the city of Berlin.’

‘Maybe that was just a coincidence...’

‘Don’t forget that in science, a series of coincidences is a regularity. For example, when Marshal Tukhachevsky was arrested, his daughter - still a child - also committed suicide. And his wife, the actress Natalya Sats, went mad and was placed in a psychiatric hospital. But from this, one can judge - psychoanalytically - about Tukhachevsky himself. He wanted to be a red Bonaparte. But now we don’t need Bonapartes. By the way, the only son of Napoleon Bonaparte - the King of Rome - was a cretin and died of a brain disease. Nothing is new under the sun. One only has to know history.’

After dinner, Stalin’s red cardinal poured himself a glass of vodka instead of dessert and declared that he had recently held a conversation with Jesus Christ himself.

What can one say about such a person? Clearly, he was mad. His father bowed his head and looked at him over his pince-nez - as one looks at a madman. But Maksim wriggled out of it:

‘Don’t worry,’ he grinned. ‘You all know, of course, that every madhouse has its own Napoleon. But if you look, you’ll find there’s also some poor woman claiming to be the Virgin Mary. And every decent madhouse has its own Jesus Christ...’

‘Ahem,’ coughed his father, rubbing his nose in disapproval.

‘So then,’ Maksim continued, ‘I ran an experiment. I ordered them to find me, among all those madmen, a Jesus who was illiterate and who had heard or read as little as possible of the original Gospel. Then I spoke with this madman about Gospel themes. Ha! You thought I was the mad one?! Nooo... I wanted to determine which Gospel teachings this lunatic had picked up from others and was merely repeating, and which ones he had arrived at on his own - with the mind of a madman! Don’t forget: the highest intellect is to some extent bound up

with madness. That's why they say: "Truth speaks through the mouths of madmen." The results turned out ve-e-ry interesting. A kind of voice from heaven - from the darkness of madness. Even Stalin was amazed and said: "Well, Maksym, you're a conjurer! Ask for what you want - you'll get it."'

'I don't like your experiments,' said his father.

'That's because you're an ignorant man,' said the commissar of the Soviet Inquisition. 'Now tell me: what do the Saviour's words in the Gospel mean - that in the last days there will be many false prophets? What are these last days?'

His father already knew it was useless to challenge Maksim in biblical knowledge, and remained silent.

'From the standpoint of dialectical materialism,' said the commissar, raising a finger, 'they are the last days before revolution. When one historical cycle ends and another begins. And now, after the revolution, we've cleansed all those false prophets and false Christs - and sent them up the chimney. Fwoooosh! Exactly as it says in the Gospel: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Right by the book of dialectics!'

'And what did you do with the madman who thought he was Jesus Christ?'

'He turned out to be an unusually harmless and kind man. I sent him to work as a gardener at the NKVD holiday home. Let him preach there. He's no false Jesus - he's the real one. I warned them: anyone lays a hand on him - I'll shoot!'

While the purge was ongoing, the newspapers constantly shouted about vigilance and actively encouraged denunciations and informers. But now, as the purge turned on the NKVD itself, they began arresting the informers too - the excessively vigilant. And the head of the 13th Department of the NKVD smirked:

'Read the Revelation of St John the Divine. It says there that the devil is the first accuser. First, we identified such types - and now we're locking them up. According to the law of the unity and struggle of opposites. That's why they say the devil tends toward self-destruction. A dialectical cycle!'

One evening, Maksim came home inebriated and, without even bothering with dinner, reached straight for his skull-shaped goblet.

'Bobka, what are you doing there?'

'Studying.'

'What?'

'Thermodynamics.'

'And do you, Bobka, know what psychodynamics is?'

'I don't know, and I don't want to.'

But Maksim continued to mutter:

‘You know, the ancient Scythians had a tradition... When a priest’s wife died, they held a grand funeral... And at the same time killed all her friends... So that she wouldn’t be lonely in the afterlife... Good custom, eh?’

Boris buried himself deeper in his thermodynamics and gave no reply. Offended by such indifference, the state security commissar announced sullenly:

‘Well then, today I signed a ticket to the next world... For several more of those... Friends.’

‘Whose friends?’ Boris could not help asking.

‘The pr-priest’s w-wife...’

‘You’re delirious,’ said the younger. ‘Go to bed.’

The elder shook his head stubbornly and launched into such a tirade that Boris felt a little uneasy. Maksim poured forth curses against the women investigators of the NKVD, who, in their refined cruelty, allegedly surpassed any male investigator. In his voice sounded a savage, morbid hatred. A nerve twitched at the corner of his mouth and his eyes, inflamed from night work and alcohol, narrowed like an animal’s, as if he saw before him his most hated enemy.

‘When I put that damned seed under the microscope,’ he muttered, ‘I saw that they’re all purebred witches...’

‘You’re hallucinating from the drink,’ Boris observed.

‘No, no... Do you remember Zinka Orbeli? Well, they’re all like that... They hid behind ideals... But the truth is, they joined the NKVD because they craved blood... But now I’ll drown them in their own blood...’

Then the general inquisitor of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs and special plenipotentiary for all unclean forces in the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics began extolling the merits of the medieval Inquisition, which, in its time, had defended people from the machinations of witches and sorcerers.

If Maksim was to be believed, the inquisitor fathers were remarkably clever men, philosophers and humanists who even knew psychodynamics and Freudianism before Freud himself. When they caught a witch, the inquisitors did not condemn her body, but only her soul - the soul that had signed a contract with the devil. But since the soul cannot be separated from the body, the body was liquidated along with the sinful soul.

However, the student of the industrial institute clearly sympathised with the witches. Female NKVD investigators - yes, they were vile. Mere sadists. But what did that have to do with the poor, innocent women who had once been burned as witches? They were simply victims of medieval superstition - the sort one reads about in so many fine novels.

Maksim sat at his desk, drinking vodka and leafing through the files of former NKVD employees, who had now become enemies of the people. Around midnight he suddenly said:

‘Bobka, I’m seeing spots... What time is it?’

‘Already midnight.’

‘Knew it... As soon as midnight strikes at the bureau, they appear... Now I bring work home - and they show up here too...’

‘Who?’ asked Boris.

The state security commissar nodded at the edge of his desk.

‘There, look at that little bastard... Sitting there, wagging his tail and sticking his tongue out... He’s doing it on purpose - trying to stop me working...’

Boris sat up from his thermodynamics textbook and looked at the empty spot.

‘Hmm, really! With little horns and green eyes. And fur like a cat’s. And his little face is actually rather cute.’

‘There you go, now you see it too,’ Maksim sighed in relief. ‘And to think you didn’t believe me...’

‘And his beard’s just like Trotsky’s,’ said Boris. ‘Plainly a Trotskyist.’

Stalin’s adviser on unclean forces sat in his unbuttoned tunic without a belt, with the serpent and sword on his sleeve, general’s stars on his shoulders and a glassy stare and held a conversation with the devil:

‘Well? Eavesdropping, spying? Wait - I’ll get to you too...’

Then the red cardinal informed the devil that Stalin had recently approved his new project: in addition to the purge, they would now place under special surveillance all the unclean forces still hiding in the Soviet Union. As part of the further development of class struggle, they would begin registering as class-alien elements all shapeshifters and forest spirits, all witches and warlocks, all devils and she-devils, all candidates and even sympathisers!

Maksim stretched out his hand, trying to catch the devil by the tail.

‘Aha - you’re scared...’

And the general inquisitor once again launched into obscene abuse. With the eyes of a madman, he stared into the empty window and reeled off the most elaborate and revolting curses with such sincere feeling, such expressive tone, that it seemed these were not meaningless profanities but mysterious incantations. And all of it directed at those wretched witches and warlocks with whom he was settling some kind of personal score.

At the end of the third year of the purge, state security commissar Maksim Rudnev received his third general's star. And the newspapers published a decree awarding Hero of Socialist Labour Rudnev the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union for the brilliant execution of special assignments from the Party and government. [554, 555]

During this period, half the membership of the Communist Party was purged, shot, or exiled to Siberia. From the leadership organs of the Party and government, more than three-quarters were liquidated. It was said that the total number of purge victims reached between seven and nine million people.

As soon as the Great Purge ended, the mysterious emblem of the purge - the serpent and the sword - quietly disappeared from the sleeves of NKVD officers. Few knew what this enigmatic symbol meant. And those who did - would remain silent.

Years passed. Over Moscow, like clouds across the sky, drifted great and minor events. And the doctor of social sciences, obscurantist and reactionary Maksim Rudnev continued his battle with the unclean forces. His classified 13th Department of the NKVD, and the equally classified Scientific Research Institute of the NKVD, grew ever larger. There, they tackled special questions of good and evil, sanity and madness, life and death. Those very problems which were once called God and the devil.

Only one thing was missing in Maksim's life - simple human joy. His grim profession had left its mark on him. He had grown gaunt, drawn, held himself rigidly upright. A stern furrow had settled between his brows and the first grey appeared early at his temples. He was no longer the cheerful left-hander Maksim, who used to wiggle his ears in jest, but a merciless fanatic inquisitor, possessed by his obsessive idea - to liquidate the devil as a class enemy.

Chapter 8. The Case of the Seven Seals

'And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the book, or to look therein.'
- Revelation of St John the Divine, 5:3

The judicial practices of the NKVD were often summed up by the saying: "Give us the man, and we'll find the article." One such proof of this was Maksim's black library, in which he jumbled together all manner of pseudo-scientific rubbish, then attempted to lash this alchemy onto modern realities.

Outwardly, he tried to give his collection a semblance of chronological order. One section, for instance, began with Merezhkovsky's investigation into Atlantis. But what could a middling writer like Merezhkovsky possibly know about the legendary Atlantis, which even Plato mentions only in passing and which, according to legend, sank to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean in a global flood thousands of years before our calendar, supposedly as punishment for some transgression? Yet Maksim saw in this some kind of parallel with the fall of Tsarist Russia.

In Maksim's office sat two of his closest colleagues from the 13th Department of the NKVD. One was Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Bykov of the NKVD Medical Service, who also held a professorship in psychopathology - a lean man in horn-rimmed spectacles with a mocking gleam in his eye and on whose collar tabs glittered the symbol of his profession: a serpent entwined around a chalice of poison, the emblem of medical wisdom. The other was Colonel Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov of the NKVD Technical Service, also a professor, specialising in the history of religious cults - a strapping, florid man with ruddy cheeks and a luxuriant, bushy beard, of imposing stature and equipped with an equally imposing pistol at his belt. On his collar tabs gleamed the insignia of the technical service - crossed hatchets that resembled either those of a fire brigade or of the medieval Inquisition. [146, 147, 290, 558, 559, 638]

'Listen here,' said Boris, 'what possible relevance does Atlantis have to the work of the NKVD?'

'A great deal indeed,' replied Colonel Dobronravov, stroking his beard. 'In this case it's not so much Atlantis itself as Merezhkovsky. A typical God-seeker. And under the guise of seeking God, they extol the devil. God-seekers, living in sin with witches.'

'Come now, Merezhkovsky was married to the poetess Zinaida Gippius.'

'Exactly. And even in her writing she confused "he" and "she".'

'So what?'

'When a person begins to confuse "he" and "she"' - the colonel raised a cautionary finger - 'that smacks of incubus and succubus devils. And that, if you please, falls under NKVD jurisdiction.'

Nearby stood the French fantastical novel *Atlantis* by Pierre Benoît, in which a mysterious Atlantean queen sends her lovers to the gallows each morning. Typical pulp fiction for bored housewives. Even the cover was yellow. Yet the professors of the 13th Department of the NKVD drew political conclusions from such boulevard literature.

Having turned to the goddess Diana - in Roman mythology the patroness of hunting, the moon and virginity - the 13th Department constructed an entire case file on Dianic cults. First and foremost, they roped in the Amazons, who, it turns out, were not so named because they lived along the Amazon, as most people believe, but because the Greek word *amazon* means 'without a breast'. For the sake of easier archery, the Amazons allegedly cauterised their right breasts. These warlike beauties dwelled in the Scythian steppes on the shores of the Black Sea.

'There's a grain of truth in every myth,' remarked Colonel Bykov of the Medical Service. 'Cauterising the breast - of course that's a myth. But if you undress a hundred women, you'll always find a few whose breasts are of uneven size. Sometimes one breast is normal, while the other is absent altogether. There you are - modern Amazons.'

'And what does the NKVD want with this?'

'Sometimes it's an external marker for the sort of women my esteemed colleague Pitirim Fyodorovich here calls witches,' the doctor smiled. 'But it's a very hazy category, so caution is advised.'

After the Amazons came several weighty anthropological works describing the cult of matriarchy - how in certain tribes, women ruled over men and what the consequences were. The conclusion drawn was this: if a household is matriarchal, then in the view of the 13th Department, it is an ominous sign and such oddities should be kept under observation.

Maintaining the veneer of science, Maksim moved from the general to the particular. For some reason, the USSR's Commissar of State Security took exception to the biblical Salome - a merry young woman who, while entertaining King Herod, invented the dance of the seven veils, that is, the American striptease. Since NKVD officers were often dubbed Herods, Maksim held nothing against King Herod. But as per the rules of the 13th Department, children answer for their parents and vice versa, and so Maksim took a special interest in Salome's mother, the aged Herodias, who had taught her daughter various unsavoury arts.

As proof of her power over men, Salome wanted to seduce St John the Baptist. When this failed, under her mother's influence and by means of feminine cunning, she persuaded Herod to grant her the head of the saint. A true moralist, Maksim sympathised with John the Baptist and marked Salome down as a biblical saboteur.

Next he opened a file on Messalina, the amorous wife of the Roman Emperor Claudius, who grew so tired of hearing reports that his wife had more lovers than hairs on his head that he simply ordered her to be beheaded. Naturally, Maksim sided with the emperor and held poor Messalina solely to blame.

In the Middle Ages, it was believed that once a year - on Walpurgis Night, the eve of 1 May - all the unclean forces from across Europe gathered on Brockenberg Mountain and held a grand witches' sabbath. And so, having read all sorts of heresies, the professors of the 13th

Department asserted that the Soviet holiday of 1 May - the festival of international workers' solidarity, when people sing and dance in Moscow's squares - from the standpoint of higher sociology, was nothing more than a remnant of Walpurgis Night. A time when witches, in celebration of their own solidarity, sang and danced on Brockenberg Mountain - itself a survival of the pagan festival of spring and fertility, which in ancient Rome was accompanied by mass drunkenness in honour of the god Bacchus and was therefore called a bacchanalia. [143, 149, 561]

Caught up in their brew, the inquisitors of the 13th Department threw everything into one cauldron - saints and sinners alike. It turned out that the name of Walpurgis Night, the festival of unclean spirits, derived from St Walpurga, an eighth-century nun who devoted her life to founding women's monasteries. This energetic saint was the daughter of St Richard, a Saxon king, who had married the daughter of St Boniface.

'Hmm, a whole holy family,' noted Boris. 'But why would witches choose Walpurga as their patroness?'

'You see, young man, saints and sinners are two sides of the same problem,' said the professor from the NKVD Technical Service. 'For example, in America, 1 November is All Saints' Day. Officially. But its eve - Halloween - is the semi-official celebration of all the unclean forces. Some people celebrate it in earnest and we keep an eye on that. But note how the sinners' holiday flows into the saints' one. That's why Dostoevsky says: "If you do not sin, you will not repent; if you do not repent, you will not be saved."'

It was clear that the NKVD professor knew his material thoroughly.

'And in Russian pagan cults,' he added, 'Walpurgis Night corresponded to the spring festival of Krasnaya Gorka, the first Monday after Thomas Sunday.' [142, 150, 562]

'But Pitirim Fyodorovich, what do you need all this for?'

'Ah, well... For instance, witches like to get married on Krasnaya Gorka. That's why we always check the wedding dates of our clients.'

They say that for an ordinary layman, a single devil is assigned to tempt him; for a monk, ten; and for a saint - a hundred. In line with this, the NKVD Inquisition carefully studied the biographies of saints in hopes of catching those devils that hovered around them.

Thus the 13th Department came upon Joan of Arc. In 1429, this peasant girl, guided by mystical voices that told her she had been chosen to save France, donned chainmail and armour, took up the sword and led the French army against the English, successfully liberating the city of Orléans - hence her name, the Maid of Orléans.

But soon Joan fell into enemy hands, and, according to the chronicle, as a witch, a soothsayer, a false prophetess, an ally of unclean spirits, a heretic, an apostate, a rebellious blasphemer delighting in bloodshed and obscenity - this holy maid was condemned to a martyr's death.

Opinions on Joan of Arc remained divided for a long time. In his play *Henry VI*, Shakespeare portrayed her as a witch. The satirist Voltaire mocked her, while the idealist Schiller glorified

her in his *Maid of Orléans*. Even the Church hesitated for five centuries before finally canonising her in 1920. As for the NKVD Inquisition, since Joan had taken up a sword, they classified her as an Amazon.

But soon Joan of Arc fell into enemy hands and, according to the chronicles, as a sorceress, a seeress, a false prophetess, an accomplice of unclean spirits, a witch, a heretic, an apostate, a rebellious blasphemer who delighted in bloodshed and obscenities, this holy maiden was condemned to a martyr's death.

For a long time, opinions on Joan of Arc remained starkly divided. In his historical drama *Henry VI*, Shakespeare portrayed her as a witch. The satirist Voltaire mocked her, while the idealist Schiller exalted her in his drama *The Maid of Orleans*. Even the Church hesitated for five whole centuries before finally canonising her as a saint in 1920. The NKVD Inquisition, however, taking into account that Joan had taken up the sword, classed her as an Amazon.

As for the devils that are said to cluster around saints, the Soviet inquisitors turned their attention to a certain Gilles de Rais. This feudal baron, one of the most powerful men in France, with influence even at court and wealth envied by the king himself, was notorious for his hatred of women. But when he first met the eighteen-year-old Joan of Arc, she made such a powerful impression on the twenty-five-year-old Gilles that he defended her before the underage Dauphin and thereby helped her become commander-in-chief of the French army. [151, 563]

In the campaigns that followed, Gilles was Joan's constant companion. During the battle for Fort Saint Augustine, when Joan was wounded and abandoned by all, only Gilles remained at her side and saved her life. When, a few months later, due to the Dauphin's indecisiveness, Joan was burned at the stake, Gilles - by then a Marshal of France - resigned from royal service in protest.

Nine years later, on 13 September 1440, the illustrious Baron Gilles de Rais, royal councillor and Marshal of France, aged thirty-six, was arrested and brought before the Inquisition on charges of heresy, blasphemy, alchemy, devil-worship, pederasty and murder. It turned out that Gilles de Rais, once Joan of Arc's fervent admirer and closest companion, had in private set himself the task of penetrating the metaphysics of evil. [390]

With a band of eighteen accomplices, he would organise hunts across the surrounding fields and forests, not for hares, but for children - primarily young shepherd boys. In his castle of Tiffauges, in the crypt of the chapel of Saint Vincent, Gilles had constructed a special stone altar, where at the hour of midnight he practised black magic, savagely tortured the captured children, and then killed them by the most inhuman methods - all as sacrifices to the devil. [152, 564]

When before the Inquisition tribunal Baron de Rais gave a detailed and conscious confession of his crimes - how he disembowelled the children, how he sat astride the dying and laughed while watching their convulsions, how he placed the severed heads of his victims beside his bed so he could admire them again in the morning - the presiding bishop of Nantes rose from his seat, approached the crucifix hanging behind the judges and covered the face of the Saviour with a black veil.

From the Middle Ages to the present day, history has known few monsters like Gilles de Rais, on whose conscience lay 134 victims. King Charles of Navarre, who was burned alive by the Inquisition in 1387 for similar offences, pales in comparison to Gilles. A later criminal of this type, Vaché, centuries afterwards tortured and murdered only eighteen young shepherds. The notorious Marquis de Sade, who killed no one and merely singed prostitutes with candlewax, paying them more or less honestly for their trouble, was, beside Baron de Rais, a positively innocent babe.

The name Gilles de Rais has been forgotten, but his deeds live on in the legends of Bluebeard - whose prototype he became. According to the interrogation protocols, he was said to wash his beard and hands in the warm blood of his victims.

On Tuesday, 26 October 1440, at eleven o'clock in the morning, Baron Gilles de Rais - former royal councillor, Marshal of France and admirer of Saint Joan of Arc - was, as the chronicle records, 'hanged by the neck until death ensued, and then consigned to the flames' together with two of his accomplices in the Place de la Madeleine in Nantes. [565]

Even here, Professor Dobronravov seized the opportunity to praise the humanity of the mediaeval Inquisition. As it turns out, Gilles was tried not by one court, but by two - ecclesiastical and secular. Having condemned his soul, the Church handed his body over to the state. The guilt of Gilles was proven beyond doubt by the testimony of witnesses and even in any modern court this would have sufficed for a conviction. But for the tribunal of the Inquisition, this was not enough. To save the sinner's soul, his repentance was required. In this, the Moscow trials and confessions of the Great Purge precisely followed the practice of the classical Inquisition.

However, the inquisitors of old were far more liberal than not only the NKVD but any modern court. When Baron de Rais publicly repented of his atrocities, knelt in the packed courtroom before the crucifix and tearfully begged forgiveness from God and the parents of the children he had sacrificed to the devil, the presiding bishop of Nantes was so moved that he rose and embraced the accused. Could such a thing happen in any modern court? And for a criminal of such magnitude?

After the death sentence had been pronounced, Baron de Rais addressed the court with several requests. He did not ask for pardon or leniency. He only asked that the Bishop of Nantes ensure people would pray for the repose of his sinful soul. And both the bishop and the townspeople of Nantes granted his request. Before the execution, a solemn procession passed through the city to the sound of all the church bells, singing psalms and praying for the soul of the sinner - a sight Gilles witnessed through the window of his cell.

'Now that was beautiful!' exclaimed Professor Dobronravov.

Gilles de Rais had asked that, as the principal culprit, he be hanged before his accomplices so that he could set an example of how to atone for one's sins. This wish was granted. As an additional act of mercy, the court decreed that his corpse, instead of being burned to ashes and scattered to the wind, would be only lightly cleansed by fire and then returned to his relatives for burial as a reward for his sincere repentance.

If Gilles de Rais lived without honour, he at least died with it. True, Professor Bykov added sceptically that Gilles, like Nero and Caligula - whose lives he had taken as models - was a

great actor at heart and simply could not resist turning even his death into a performance. The mortal remains of the sinful baron were buried in the crypt of the Carmelite church, next to the ashes of the ancient Dukes of Brittany.

Before his death, Gilles de Rais entrusted his soul to Saint James and Saint Michael - the very same saints to whom Joan of Arc had commended her soul. [155, 567]

Indeed, close to Saint Joan, the NKVD Inquisition had caught a devil of the rarest kind. Why had Gilles de Rais, a self-confessed misogynist, suddenly become the closest ally of the Maid of Orleans? What mysterious bond united these two utterly different figures in life and in death, so much so that even after death they entrusted their souls to the same heavenly patrons? And why did the 13th Department of the NKVD take such interest in all this?

'Clearly this de Rais was just as much a sadist as de Sade,' said Boris. 'And what happened next?'

'Gilles de Rais and Joan of Arc were the same kind of person,' said Professor Bykov. 'And they both knew it perfectly well. The only difference is that Gilles indulged his vices in private - which is why he was hanged. Joan channelled the same spiritual impulses - let us be honest, the same vices - into service of the state. That is why people argued about her for five hundred years before declaring her a saint. But technically, those who burned her as a witch delighting in bloodshed were also right.

'The point, young man, is that every revolution swarms with these types, who unleash their pathological urges under the pretext of revolutionary legality. So how does one tell the saintly sinner from the sinful saint? For example, before the French Revolution, the Marquis de Sade spent most of his life in prison. But the Revolution not only released him, it made him - what? A judge of the Revolutionary Tribunal! Unless you know the cases of Gilles de Rais and Joan of Arc, you won't understand Marat and Robespierre, Dzerzhinsky and Yezhov. And the Jacobins of the French Revolution took their name from the very same Saint James to whom Gilles de Rais and Joan of Arc entrusted their souls.'

While rummaging through books and flipping through marked passages, Boris saw that following the Maid of Orleans, the Soviet Inquisition had also taken note of Catherine the Great. But they were not interested in those formal monuments to grandeur which Catherine had erected for herself. Rather, they examined the legal and moral aspects of her reign. From this point of view, in the eyes of the NKVD's legalists, she was a German and a usurper of the Russian throne, which she had seized with the help of her lovers; a husband-killer, having sent her half-witted spouse Peter III - grandson of Peter the Great - to his death with the aid of the same lovers; and a great libertine, leaving behind a similarly half-witted heir, Paul I, who resembled her favourite Saltykov as if cast in the same mould, as well as a whole brood of illegitimate children.

To the moralists of the 13th Department, Catherine the Great was simply a Russian Messalina whose head had not been lopped off in time. They also suspected the tsarina of being complicit in matriarchy.

'But what exactly is the link between Joan of Arc and Catherine the Great?' asked Boris.

‘The law of the unity of opposites,’ replied Dr Bykov. ‘Put the two together and you get a whole.’

‘How do you mean?’

‘It’s a rather specialised topic. Joan of Arc was not only a virgin, but just as much a man-hater as Gilles de Rais was a woman-hater. Catherine the Great, by contrast, loved men more than was proper.’

‘So where’s the unity?’

‘People say Catherine suffered from a kind of nymphomania. But from a psychological point of view, such a woman cannot truly love any one man. That’s why she keeps changing them.’

‘Can it be cured?’

‘There is a cure, but many patients are afraid of it. Sometimes, only another woman can cure it. Someone like Joan of Arc.’

‘Aha - that’s how the unity of opposites works?’

‘Yes - that is, it cancels itself out into a psychological zero. But then Joan would never have become the Maid of Orleans and Catherine would hardly have become Great.’

After the Dianic cults, the Amazons and matriarchy, the NKVD obscurantists moved, as if by historical development, to undermining the suffragettes. They regarded these bold fighters for women’s emancipation with not a trace of respect, considering them merely modern-day Amazons. The lofty ideals and resounding slogans with which the suffragettes armed themselves at rallies and demonstrations were, in their view, mere camouflage. What they really wanted, according to this interpretation, was only one form of equality with men - the right to wear trousers.

One book, stamped in red by the NKVD, was titled *The Emancipation of Women in the Light of Psychopathology*. No wonder people said of the NKVD: give us the person, and we’ll find the article.

Having thus established this curious historical groundwork, Maksim’s library proceeded to the contemporary period in the form of an internal archive. Here was a folder of complaints and denunciations about one of the most esteemed grandmothers of the Russian Revolution - Madame Kollontai. The daughter of a tsarist general, she had been so class-conscious that in her youth she joined the underground Bolsheviks and took part in the revolution. [156, 568]

With equal vigour, this red suffragette lived in free union with revolutionary sailors and gained notoriety as the apostle of free love. In a group photograph marking the first anniversary of October, she stood among the twelve apostles led by Lenin - the only woman among them. Stalin was absent, but she was present. Clearly, she had flown high. There was also a photograph of her in her youth, hair dishevelled and eyes wild.

‘Ivan Vasilyevich, why do her eyes look like that - as if she’s hung over?’

‘She sniffed cocaine, poor dear,’ replied the NKVD medic.

Later, this midwife of the October Revolution served as ambassador to Sweden, the only Soviet woman to hold such a high diplomatic rank. But instead of a service record, the folder on Kollontai contained, stamped “Top Secret,” detailed interrogation transcripts from people who had known this priestess of free love intimately and firsthand.

There was a similar file on Yelena Stasova, a close associate of Lenin and later secretary to Stalin. She too came from the titled nobility but was so thoroughly emancipated that she devoted her life to the ruthless destruction of that very nobility. While serving as secretary of the Party Central Committee, this sweet lady did not concern herself with schools or, say, orphanages, but oversaw the Fifth Department of the Central Committee - foreign espionage. [157, 569]

Then came another suffragette - the old Bolshevik Zemlyachka. Tiny as a macaque and shrivelled like a relic, she was a wizened old woman with pince-nez perched on her nose. She had distinguished herself during the Civil War by jointly running the Crimean Cheka with Béla Kun for three years, turning the Black Sea red with blood. Demonstrating exemplary revolutionary zeal, she personally executed captured White officers. [158, 570]

‘Charming old ladies, eh?’ smiled Dr Bykov. Strange how, in their pursuit of unclean spirits, the NKVD Inquisition kept digging up the foundations of all the Communist saints. Next to them was a thick dossier on Dolores Ibárruri - La Pasionaria - the fiery tribune of the Spanish Civil War. Wife of Republican Prime Minister Negrín, she was leader of the Spanish Communist Party and took part in the war more actively than her husband. She too found entertainment in personally executing prisoners. [159]

When things took a turn for the worse, she left her Republican husband to face the consequences of her Communist sins, and fled to Moscow. In the notes of the 13th Department of the NKVD there was a trace of regret that modern Spain lacked a Torquemada to acquaint this revolutionary tribune with the tribunal of the Inquisition.

The next case began with a reference to entomology and a certain species of spider in which the female customarily devours the male after the wedding night. Alongside this was the spider-like visage of Ana Pauker, lips pursed as though ready to spit. During the purge of the Moscow Comintern, this spider-woman Pauker had denounced her own husband to the NKVD, accusing him of Trotskyism. Before his death, Marcel Pauker too passed through the 13th Department, where he gave detailed testimony about his spider-wife - testimony which, strangely enough, concerned not her political views, but her techniques of love. [160, 280, 572, 628]

Following this was an alphabetical list of all Ana Pauker’s lovers - suspiciously similar to a membership roll of the Comintern. And after that, a second list: of those whom this amorous lady had caused to be shot in the cellars of the NKVD.

‘You see,’ said Dr Bykov, ‘she did exactly what the Atlantean queen did. That’s why we’re interested in Atlantis.’

Meanwhile, State Security Commissar Maksim Rudnev was taking a break from his hunt for unclean spirits and quietly tending to his aquarium. One of his goldfish had come down with

an upset stomach, and Maksim, sleeves rolled up, was transferring the ailing fish into a separate basin filled with a mild solution of Glauber's salt. [161, 573]

'Maks,' said Boris, 'you're reducing everything to questions of sex. It all smacks a bit of Freudian psychoanalysis. And Freudism is officially banned here.'

'Indeed. Freudism is banned not only by the Communists but also by the Catholic Church. That's because in Freudism, truth is mixed with falsehood. And to the uninitiated, it's hard to tell one from the other.'

'All right,' said Boris. 'But what *is* all this?'

Maksim, crouched beside the basin, stirring the water with his finger, mumbled like a shaman in trance:

'Hmm-hmm. What is all this? This... This is the Case of the Seven Seals. And neither Freud nor the Pope himself can give you an answer to *this*.'

'And you can?'

'Of course,' smiled the Commissar of State Security of the USSR. 'We know everything.'

Chapter 9. By Cross and by Sword

A convulsion shall begin the like of which the world has never seen...

Rus shall grow dim; the Earth shall weep for her old gods...

F. M. Dostoevsky, ***Demons***

On an early June morning in 1941, the war began. As in all defence-related institutions, the 13th Department of the NKVD also opened its mobilisation packet, which contained a list of measures to be taken in the event of war. The first of these measures: State Security Commissar Rudnev, in the rank of Colonel General, was appointed head of the NKVD's special weapons division.

Hitler's air armadas bombed Kyiv, Odessa and Minsk. German tank divisions drove deep into Soviet territory. The Red Army retreated, sustaining millions of casualties - dead, wounded and captured. Stalin addressed the nation over the radio:

'Dear brothers and sisters...'

He was so overcome with emotion that he drank water as he spoke, and the people could hear his teeth knocking against the rim of the glass.

In the lobby of the industrial institute where Boris studied, a large map of the Soviet Union was posted. The front line was marked with red thread and pins. Every day, Boris watched that line recede inexorably.

As soon as the Great Purge ended, Maksim gave up drinking as abruptly as he had started, and even seemed faintly bored. Now, with anti-aircraft guns cracking over Moscow in the evenings, he suddenly took an interest in the history of ancient Roman entertainments. Alongside this, he began leafing through books on psychoanalysis.

From out of the darkness of millennia, Roman amphitheatres and the first Christian martyrs arose before the general's eyes - martyrs walking towards death. They were crucified, torn apart by wild beasts, burned alive as Nero's living torches. Sometimes, their lives might have been spared on a single condition. But they chose death, and went to it singing psalms in the amphitheatre arenas.

'Again, on one condition,' the general murmured thoughtfully. 'So, what's needed is an amphitheatre. Very well - let us try...'

Soon, newspapers carried reports of an extraordinary feat by three Soviet fighter pilots on the approaches to Leningrad. Having run out of ammunition, they hurled their powerless "Hawk" planes headlong into the enemy bombers, perishing together with the downed foes. Their portraits appeared on the front pages of every newspaper. All three were posthumously awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. [162, 181]

Then such feats became so fashionable that, even with a full complement of ammunition, Soviet pilots would ram the enemy, courting certain death in a storm of twisted metal and

mingled blood - their own and the enemy's. The much-vaunted German aces did not know what to make of these Soviet fledglings who disregarded all the rules of aerial combat.

Readers of the Soviet press thought these were merely propaganda stunts from Sovinformburo. But the leadership of the Soviet Air Forces, alarmed by the pointless loss of aircraft, protested to Stalin, requesting protection from the mysterious experiments of the 13th Department of the NKVD. As a result, a special order was issued allowing aerial ramming only in exceptional cases. Aircraft were more valuable than men. [176, 577]

Anyone who followed the Soviet press during the war will remember how, after the wave of aerial ramming, another no less extraordinary campaign began - this time in the naval infantry, formed from the crews of sunken ships. Armed with bundles of hand grenades, heroic marines suddenly began hurling themselves under the treads of German tanks like living mines. The tanks went up in flames, taking the brave men with them. It was cheaper than aerial ramming.

Behind all this stood the 13th Department of the NKVD, which looked after its martyr-heroes even after death. Every newspaper report, every effusive eulogy, every award - everything connected with their demise was strictly overseen by Professor Rudnev, who had grasped the secret of Nero's living torches.

'You're making a profit from death again,' said Boris. 'What's really going on?'

This time Maksim replied quite readily:

'You see, when a group of martyrs was taken and given a choice - renounce Christianity or be executed in the basement - most of them renounced. But when the choice was between renunciation and death in the arena, most chose death. But death with glory. The point is, these martyrs belonged to a certain psychological category of people - and they still exist today. One only has to create the proper conditions.'

'Yes, but it's practically murder,' said Boris, addressing his brother.

It was Colonel Dobronravov, seated nearby, who answered for him:

'You're somewhat mistaken, young man. Only the first three volunteers were actually prepared by us. Then we gave them the necessary aura and, so to speak, opened the gates of paradise. The rest entered those gates of their own accord. More than that, we didn't even know who would go through. Besides, if we hadn't given them the chance to die with honour, glory and benefit, most of them would have ended badly anyway. And no one would have known why.'

'Clear as mud,' said the student.

'Ah, you Doubting Thomas,' said Maksim.

'What are you studying there?' Colonel Dobronravov asked good-naturedly, peering over Boris's shoulder. 'Ah, Stolypin's reforms. Yes, Stolypin was a great statesman. If it hadn't been for Bogrov's bullet, who knows - perhaps all Russian history would have taken a very different path.' [178, 179, 579, 580]

‘What party did this Bogrov belong to?’

‘To the party some people associate with the Antichrist,’ smirked the NKVD colonel, a specialist in the history of religious cults. ‘Besides, Bogrov was a born terrorist - something like a living infernal machine. And certain people knew that.’

‘How did it happen, then?’

‘To understand it, one must know two things. First, in those turbulent times, among the rotten intelligentsia, the murder of statesmen was considered as noble and heroic an act as the feats of our volunteer kamikazes today. Then, as now, the press prepared them. Second - and this is highly significant - before the attempt on Stolypin, Bogrov had attempted suicide. He sought death, but preferred a death with glory.’

‘And he was an informant for the Okhrana,’ added Maksim.

‘Quite naturally,’ agreed the colonel. ‘These schizophrenics always lead double lives. The problem of saints and sinners.’

‘With you lot, it’s impossible to tell saints from sinners,’ remarked Boris, like a true Doubting Thomas. ‘Yesterday they were saints, today they’re sinners.’

‘From sinner to saint - or the other way round - the distance is far shorter than you imagine,’ rumbled the colonel. ‘Sometimes they even sleep in the same bed. Sometimes they are one and the same person. And sometimes it’s hard to tell whether it’s a sinful saint or a saintly sinner.’ He stretched his arms so that the cloth of his tunic creaked. ‘By the way, Maksim Aleksandrovich, I was very taken with the problems you raised at our last meeting. As you rightly said: *zwei Seelen leben in meiner Brust*. Goethe himself is a fine example. These souls wrestle with each other. Sometimes one soul tries to deceive the other. So what if we were to help the deceived soul? A marvellous idea!’ The cheerful colonel jumped up and began pacing the room. ‘And on that note, Maksim Aleksandrovich, you mentioned the role of religion in all this. If things develop as you anticipate... And after all, you’re the only man Stalin listens to. Just remember this - ever since I was a boy, I’ve adored the smell of incense.’ [163]

According to the mobilisation packet’s instructions, the research staff of Professor Rudnev’s institute were given new assignments. Some, the historians, feverishly combed through secret state archives and rummaged through stacks of banned or confiscated pre-revolutionary books. Others, the psychologists, hauled in to the NKVD various doddering old men and women whose names were linked to the archives, and interrogated them, tapping their pistols on the table:

‘Try to understand - now is not the time to coddle you. So then...’

The interrogators in white coats were interested in such strange matters that the elderly sinners, half-dead with fear, crossed themselves after questioning, wondering how these mysterious agents could read people’s souls. Professor Rudnev’s students knew their craft. They somehow knew even of those petty sins which the aged had never confessed at any time in their lives and had hoped to take to the grave. But more than anything, the interrogators were interested in details of the lives of the deceased.

‘Why do you want this?’ the sinner protested timidly. ‘These people have been dead for ages.’

‘It’s needed to save the Motherland,’ insisted the inquisitor in the white coat.

‘But it was just a literary circle...’

‘And did they study Berdyaev’s philosophy?’

‘Well, it was simply a new philosophical trend...’

‘And how about Steiner’s anthroposophy?’

‘Yes, but at the time it was fashionable...’

‘Did they dabble in Blavatsky’s occultism?’

‘Oh, just out of boredom...’

‘And did they practise spiritualism?’

‘But that was just a bit of fun...’

‘We know better what it was,’ the investigator cut him off curtly. ‘Sign this non-disclosure form concerning military secrets. And bear in mind: the penalty is death.’

Of course, the interrogators in white coats had no intention of holding séances or summoning the souls of the dead. What interested them far more were the living children or relatives of those deceased.

‘But after the Revolution all those people were exiled abroad,’ the sinner said in surprise, ‘along with their families. In connection with the “Blue Star” affair.’

‘And what about the children of Maria Abramovna?’ the investigator prompted.

‘Goodness no, Maria Abramovna had no children. She was too absorbed in various revolutions.’

‘And is her sister still alive?’

‘Yes, well, she met with misfortune in old age. Out of the blue, she poisoned herself. They say it was for love.’

‘And her children?’

‘Vera Aleksandrovna had...’

‘Pardon me, wasn’t she Maria Abramovna’s sister?’

‘No, half-sister. From a second marriage. Her daughter lived in Berlin and her adopted son somewhere in...’

‘We’re not interested in adopted children. Now, tell us more about the daughter. Was she married?’

‘No. Her mother’s suicide affected her so deeply that...’

‘I see. Now, what did she do in Berlin? First, here’s a list of individuals who were exiled. There are several hundred names. Do you understand?’

Using the results of these interrogations, operatives from the 13th Department did not rely on the occult transmission of thoughts over distance by the methods of Blavatsky, but preferred encrypted radio communication. At night, ciphered messages flew out to Soviet intelligence residencies across Europe.

When Maksim returned home from work, instead of drinking, he now idled away his time with poetry. He read the most absurd, inappropriate verses for wartime - the obscure poetry of the French Symbolists and the no less esoteric, decadent works of Russian fin-de-siècle writers, which had proliferated like poisonous toadstools in Russian literature before the First World War.

While on all fronts - from the Black to the White Sea - bloody rearguard battles raged against Hitler’s advancing tank columns and air squadrons, General Rudnev sat rereading Blok’s poem *The Twelve*, in which the Symbolist poet described a band of twelve blasphemous Red Guards during the Revolution.

The poem’s ending puzzled everyone - Reds and Whites alike: ‘In a white wreath of roses - ahead - Jesus Christ.’ For the Whites it was blasphemy. For the Reds - an irritating religious mysticism.

‘So, twelve Red Guards and Christ makes thirteen,’ muttered the head of the 13th Department. ‘Then it’s not Christ, but the Antichrist. We know their tricks - always reversing everything, like 69. Published by Alkonost Press.’ (*Sirin* and *Alkonost* are mythological Slavic birds of joy and sorrow.) [170]

Sirin (the pseudonym of the author of *Lolita*, Nabokov) - we know him too. And Catullus’s galliambics. Fine poems to Lesbia. Ah, those Symbolists. We know your symbols.

‘What dialectic is that supposed to be?’ asked Boris.

‘The kind that ends with Blok dying in a state of quiet insanity.’

‘Everyone’s mad in your world, Max. Except you.’

The general paid no attention and kept murmuring Blok’s verses:

‘I fear my soul’s two faces... I seek protection from Christ... Yet beneath the hypocrite’s mask, false lips grin... I stir the memory of the Two-Faced...’

Then came pure Kabbalism:

‘The Two-Faced... *In daemone deus* - God in the devil... Marxist unity and struggle of opposites... Hitler and Stalin - they are the same... And for this, millions are being slaughtered... Why?... *In daemone deus*...’

In winter, Boris’s room door remained open because there was no stove and without the draught it would be too cold. So he was forced to listen to everything going on in his brother’s room.

‘Max,’ the student asked, ‘if you haven’t completely lost your mind, then explain to me - what is the devil?’

‘The devil is a complex psychobiological phenomenon that destroys the soul and body of man. And a philosophical concept.’

‘So, the devil doesn’t really exist?’

‘If he didn’t exist,’ the general said bitterly, ‘then neither would Hitler nor Stalin. And this cursed war wouldn’t exist either.’

Maksim’s taste in music changed too. Gone was Chaliapin’s ruffian ballad. Now, night after night, he sat, head bowed, listening intently to the same record - Tchaikovsky’s *1812 Overture*, about Napoleon’s invasion of Russia.

The genius of the great composer captured the heavy tread of French grenadiers approaching Moscow. Morning mists float over the sleeping fields of Borodino on the eve of battle. Bugles sound, rousing soldiers to a fight to the death. The drums of Napoleon’s advancing regiments thunder and Russian redoubt cannon boom in reply.

White-stoned Moscow burns, set ablaze by Russian peasants. Arms folded, Napoleon stands on the Kremlin wall, grimly watching the conquered but unyielding capital.

One winter evening, with the Germans already at the gates of Moscow, Maksim sat again with a collection of bizarre Futurist poets under the promising title *Cerebral Liquefaction*. But he did not read. With eyes closed, he listened to Tchaikovsky’s overture. When the bugles called to arms on the field of Borodino, the general stood abruptly and, as though speaking to the composer’s ghost, declared: [165, 184]

‘Well done, Pyotr Ilyich!’ He straightened his tunic as if preparing for campaign. ‘Let’s see what comes of it.’

‘What’s going on?’ called Boris from his room.

Hands in the pockets of his breeches, the General of State Security, now sober, began raving again:

‘We’ll try to fight the devil with cross and sword. First the cross. Only if that fails - the sword.’

‘So the policy is changing, is it?’ said the younger man in his usual mocking tone.

‘Yes,’ replied the elder with regret. ‘This curse of mankind is far more complex and serious than you sceptical Thomases think.’

‘So you’ve failed the Party and the Government?’

‘Yes. The problem of the devil cannot be solved. But it can be localised. Or redirected in a more favourable direction.’

Doubting Thomas offered his sympathy:

‘Well then, General, shut down the Inquisition and sign up for a monastery.’

‘Precisely. That’s the same conclusion the Church Fathers eventually reached. But if the devil can’t be eliminated, then I’ll put him to work... I’ll send him to the front!’

‘Don’t forget to sign a little agreement with him. On friendship and mutual assistance.’

‘Yes, we’ll try!’ exclaimed the General of State Security of the USSR. ‘I’ve got so many first-rate shapeshifters in the camps. No one would ever guess what they really are.’

‘Don’t forget your witches,’ Doubting Thomas mocked.

‘Yes, beauties and clever ones too.’ The general was so carried away that there was even a note of fondness in his voice for his sworn enemies. ‘I’ll let them play with death.’

‘Don’t leave out the wizards,’ Boris advised. ‘Why keep them locked up? Unleash the whole gang on Hitler. Might even earn yourself another medal.’

The general had already internally switched to the side of the sinners and, like the devil’s advocate, tried to justify his former foes:

‘Many of them aren’t even that guilty. Their whole lives they had to hide, disguise themselves, be double-faced, lie.’

‘Then they’ll make superb spies and saboteurs,’ the student egged him on. ‘Or maybe saboteurs? What about the fifth column?’

‘Yes, I’ll make them defend the Motherland,’ the general said sternly. He chewed his lip and muttered through clenched teeth, ‘And besides, they’re still people. In most cases, it’s their ancestors who were to blame... We are all guilty. Very well, we shall see.’

And the machine of the 13th Department of the NKVD began to turn in three shifts. The gates of the concentration camps and special isolators opened without a creak - camps where the builders of the classless society had imprisoned the class-alien element: witches and sorcerers, wood goblins and shapeshifters, devils and devilesses. In the homeland’s hour of need, General Maksim Rudnev drove the devil’s servants into battle for the Motherland.

Under the command of the general-sorcerer, detachments of warlocks, now trained saboteurs, surged across the front lines to blow up roads, bridges and depots in the German rear. Cold, seductive witches, transformed into spies, slithered into the beds of German officers like snakes, extracting the Wehrmacht's military secrets. Thousands upon thousands of shapeshifters, wood demons and other such unclean creatures, using poison, knives and dynamite, set about dismantling Hitler's war machine from the rear. Possessed, the devil's general drove his hordes mercilessly into the maw of death.

Officially, little is known about the exploits of Professor Rudnev's unclean forces, though they were apparently quite effective, judging by the medals that began to appear on his chest. A year later, returning from a covert inspection of the German army's rear, where he had checked up on the activities of his infernal operatives, he was promoted to General of the Army of Special Weapons and awarded a second Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union. The alliance with the devil was bearing fruit.

'It was my suggestion, after all,' Boris tried to joke. But he was not in a joking mood.

While General Rudnev sabotaged the German rear, Professor Rudnev focused on reinforcing the Soviet home front. Armed with extraordinary powers, emissaries of the 13th Department roamed through universities and scientific institutes across the USSR, hunting suitable minds for Professor Rudnev's brain trust.

The whole world stood amazed when, after twenty-five years of savage persecution, Stalin abruptly lifted the ban on the Orthodox Church. The first theological seminary soon opened and not far from Moscow, the first monastery. No one was more surprised than Stalin himself to discover how eagerly people rushed to wed and baptise their children in church. But no one knew that behind this hard-won decision stood his red cardinal - Dr Rudnev, Doctor of Sociology, who was interested in God solely as the antithesis of the devil. Nor did anyone know that the humble Archbishop Pitirim was, in the world, Major General of State Security Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov, the right-hand man of the 13th Department's chief.

On dark partisan nights, bearded old-timers, delighted that they could now cross themselves again, made sweeping signs of the cross and told tales round the campfires to young partisans - stories of how, on the blackest of nights, when lightning flashed and thunder roared, when the unclean spirits held their feast, the devil himself would come flying to the partisan rear from Moscow in the form of an NKVD general.

'Hair like fire. Eyes green. Skin pale as a corpse,' the old man would whisper.

'Oh, uncle, that's terrifying!' cried a young partisan woman.

'You little fool, cross yourself!' the old-timer would advise.

In hushed tones, they passed along rumours that, from the dugout where the devil-general conducted his judgment and punishment, one could sometimes hear at night the sound of a crude little song about betrayed love, with a goatish baritone joining in:

The whole world shall tremble in punishment,
Even Sa-a-a-tan shall shudder...

And in the night sky, from horizon to horizon, in dynamite flashes and thunderclaps, in the glow of fires, death danced. The triangles, squares and bars on Red Army uniforms disappeared, replaced by the old tsarist shoulder boards. Stalin introduced a new officer's code of honour, which included kneeling to kiss the regimental banners before battle and after battle, executing cowards before the assembled unit. Not every knightly order could boast such a code of military honour as that of the Soviet Guard.

Shortly after the war, the NKVD was renamed the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Professor Rudnev's Research Institute became a major institution, housed in a separate new building on the bank of the Moskva River. But there was no sign on the door and all the researchers in that establishment continued to wear the NKVD-MVD uniform under their white lab coats. Their new assignment was to monitor the devil's activity throughout the world - the same devil, the Prince of This World, whom the mediaeval Inquisition had hunted in vain and whom Professor Rudnev had placed at the service of Soviet power. [588, 623]

For exceptional services during the war, Marshal of State Security Maksim Rudnev was appointed First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR. Now, left-handed Maksim could eliminate anyone with a single stroke of the pen. Thus was fulfilled the childhood wish he had once expressed to God: to become big and strong.

Chapter 10. The House of Evil Good

[191]

Sometimes it is good to go down the path of evil,
for it leads to the highest good.

- N. Berdyaev, philosopher and seeker of God

After the war, Maksim lived in a quiet, neglected cul-de-sac near Gogolevsky Boulevard, where there was no street traffic or noise and where in autumn the whole cobbled road was covered in a soft carpet of fallen leaves, from which boys built smoky bonfires. Behind heavy wrought-iron gates, at the far end of the courtyard, stood an old manor house, which before the revolution had belonged to a prominent German merchant.

The German had been eccentric and built himself a Russian-style cottage, but with a German accent. He constructed a two-storey log frame out of timber, then, mindful of Russian winters, covered the entire house inside and out with a thick layer of felt, the sort used by the Kyrgyz to make their yurts. On top of the felt he nailed wooden laths and plastered over the lot. Inside, the ingenious German, instead of wallpaper, pasted the walls with canvas normally used for painting and commissioned artists to decorate them in oils, with each mural matching the function of the room.

The wide Venetian windows were framed by elaborate stained glass panels in lead casings, made to special order in Nuremberg. When sunlight played across these stained scenes from the Holy Scriptures, it felt less like being in a dwelling and more like a mediaeval abbey. Atop the roof spun a weather vane with a jaunty golden cockerel.

Deciding to settle in this house, Maksim evicted a whole troop of Party workers, who had been living there with their families, crammed into every room. They had stripped the walls so thoroughly that, beneath the remnants of canvas and felt, the original structure of the building was visible right down to the logs of the frame. Maksim then meticulously restored the entire house, even the golden cockerel on the roof, added a tall green fence with barbed wire above the cast-iron railings and moved in alone with his German shepherd, Rolf and a cat called Vasya, whom he had once rescued as a kitten from the street. [289, 637]

In the semi-basement there was a kitchen, reached by an ornate spiral staircase, where a vast Russian stove gleamed with German tiles and red copper. It was big enough to roast an entire ox. Nearby were the servants' quarters, from which Maksim had expelled a whole nest of mothers-in-law - a species even Soviet Party officials preferred to isolate from their families via treacherous spiral staircases, on which it was easy to break one's neck. These rooms were now occupied by the butler, Nikolai and his wife, who ran the kitchen.

As befits a true gentleman's residence, the house under the golden cockerel had several guest rooms, always available for a night's stay. One such guest was occasionally Boris Rudnev, when night overtook him near Gogolevsky Boulevard and he could not be bothered to go home.

In an effort to draw his younger brother closer, Maksim had even given him a second key to the house. But every morning, waking up in the house under the golden cockerel, the agitprop instructor felt like a spy in an enemy fortress. Everything here flew in the face of every agitprop directive - especially Maksim's library of forbidden books. One careless remark at work and you could be expelled from the Party or arrested. [190, 591, 593]

On Saturdays, women sometimes appeared in the house under the golden cockerel. But since the suicide of his beloved wife and the death of his child, Maksim no longer thought about marriage. He lived as a solitary bachelor, like a lone wolf.

Besides all this, the 13th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs had its own harem. These harem girls, or *guriyas*, were deployed to entertain foreign diplomats, journalists, and indeed any foreigner - or high-ranking Soviet dignitaries. In Moscow they were known simply as the 'Ministry of Internal Affairs can-do girls'. Depending on their special qualifications and attributes, these can-do girls were divided into several categories. [192, 202, 592]

Some of the higher-tier *guriyas* were daughters of the finest aristocratic families of old Russia - princesses and countesses with lineages that could be traced back almost to the Rurikids.

It was said that one such *guriya*, descended from the line of the former Caucasian kings, was either the wife or concubine of the Minister of Internal Affairs himself, Beria. Rumour also had it that the brother-in-law of the Soviet Minister of Secret Police was none other than a foreign claimant to the Romanov throne, married to the second sister of the tsarevnas.

As a kind of compensation, high-class *guriyas* were granted the right to say yes or no at will. Some of these priestesses of love were so beautiful and intelligent that even the head of the 13th Department himself did not scorn their yes or no.

On such days, Maksim would forgo his marshal's uniform and wear civilian clothes, so that the *guriyas* would not realise they had been guests of the Sultan himself. In the morning, butler Nikolai would respectfully seat the *guriya* in a car and drive her home. Maksim, meanwhile, would wander absently through the rooms, stretch and play with the dog or the cat.

Once, Boris nodded after a dazzling blonde and asked:

'Why don't you marry someone like her?'

'It's a ridiculous situation,' Maksim yawned. 'You won't find finer beauties in Moscow. But you can't marry them.'

'Why not?'

'Because these beauties aren't ordinary - they're special.'

'What kind of special?'

‘The enchanted kind,’ Maksim smirked. ‘You have to know how to handle them.’ He then looked sternly at his younger brother and frowned. ‘Don’t you dare get involved with them. Nothing but misfortune will come of it…’

Maksim’s study looked out onto an old, overgrown garden. A large wall-length window flanked by stained glass. Scenes from the Scriptures muted the daylight, as if whispering some quiet reminder. Facing the window, towards the world, stood Maksim’s writing desk. Behind his back, death lurked silently: all the study’s walls were made up of heavy oak bookshelves, packed from floor to ceiling with books in various languages, all on the same theme - demonology of every kind. Any black magician or mediaeval alchemist seeking the secrets of life and death would envy such a library.

Opening the first book that came to hand, Boris immediately came upon a passage underlined by Maksim:

‘…hear and tremble, O Satan, enemy of the faith, enemy of mankind, friend of death, thief of life, shaker of justice, source of evil, root of vice, seducer of men, betrayer of nations, fountain of envy, cause of greed, beginning of discord, purveyor of sorrow - hear, O Satan and obey!’

‘What’s this?’ asked the agitprop instructor. ‘A formula for summoning the devil?’

‘Quite the opposite,’ replied Maksim, sipping fizzy water. ‘It’s from the official *Rituale Romanum* - the liturgy read to cast out evil spirits from the possessed.’ [204, 594]

‘Why did you underline it then?’

‘Because it’s a very precise characterisation of Satan. On every count.’

Feeling like a guest, the agitprop instructor tried to hold back. Yet inevitably, Satan would soon become the subject of debate and disagreement - precisely in the manner described by that characterisation Maksim liked so much.

Next to it stood a thoroughly modern book, *Priesta New Ritual*, published in New York in 1947. Yet even this new ritual sang the same old tune. During a baptism, before pouring the water, the priest had to drive out the devil. The MVD marshal had underlined in red pencil: [205, 595]

‘I adjure thee, unclean spirit, in the name of God the Father Almighty and in the name of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Judge and by the power of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from this servant of God, whom our Lord hath deigned to choose as His holy temple, that he may become the temple of the living God and that the Holy Spirit may dwell within him.’

‘But isn’t it generally held that God lives in heaven?’ objected the agitprop instructor.

The Marshal of State Security scratched the cat behind the ear and, like an experienced theologian forced to argue with an unbeliever, amiably explained:

‘The Kingdom of God is not in heaven at all. God dwells not somewhere up above, but in the souls of men… And so does the devil.’

Maksim had once enjoyed teasing their father, who went to church but muddled the details of the Gospels. Now he had turned to his younger brother:

‘Listen, comrade agitprop man, could you give me a little instruction?’

‘On what, precisely?’ asked the instructor warily.

‘Well, for example - tell me, what does the Soviet star mean?’

‘It’s the symbol of communism.’

‘Why five points?’

‘They represent the five continents.’

‘Then why do the American capitalists have the same star?’

‘Who the hell knows!’ the instructor surrendered.

The marshal-sorcerer smiled condescendingly, pulled out a book on mediaeval Kabbalah, leafed through and showed him a picture. It was an exact replica of the Soviet five-pointed star, with only one difference: inside the star stood a naked man. His head in the top point, arms outstretched at shoulder level in the side points, legs spread into the bottom points. The man’s body was covered in Kabbalistic symbols, mingled with suns, moons, stars and so on.

‘You see,’ said Maksim, grinning like Doctor Faustus, ‘that’s where the founders of communism borrowed the star.’

‘And why do the Americans have the same star?’
‘Because the American star was born of the American Revolution. And all revolutions are made by the same sort of people.’

‘What sort of people?’

‘The sort you find among African witch-doctors, Siberian shamans and mediaeval witches and warlocks. That’s why they were burned. Hitler drove them into the gas chambers. Stalin sent them to Siberia.’

At this point, the head of the 13th Department and Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR began quoting his favourite clever Jews, the apostles of the 13th Department - the criminologist Lombroso, the degeneration theorist Nordau and the psychoanalyst Freud. The point was this: all revolutionaries are mentally disturbed degenerates. The majority end up on the gallows; a minority become great men. But gallows-fodder and great men, he said, are one and the same.

‘Fine,’ said Maksim. ‘Now then, comrade from agitprop, tell me why the Soviet star is red?’

‘It’s the symbol of the proletariat’s red blood.’

‘Yes, there is a certain biological meaning in that. And why is the American star white and blue?’

‘Who the hell knows,’ the agitprop instructor conceded again.

Maksim then explained with a tolerant air:

‘One of Lenin’s closest comrades swore before his execution that the American white-and-blue star symbolises the white bone and blue blood of the intelligentsia who made the American Revolution. By the way, comrade from agitprop, tell me this: what is “blue blood”?’

‘Oh, it’s just a figure of speech…’

‘No,’ said the Doctor of Social Sciences, shaking his head. ‘“Blue blood” is what is now called a negative Rh factor. That factor was discovered by Landsteiner and Wiener in 1939. But I identified it several years earlier.’

‘And what exactly is this factor?’

‘Essentially, a negative Rh factor is a blood condition that hinders reproduction. It causes the birth of non-viable, bluish infants. Possibly, that’s where the expression “blue blood” came from. This factor is directly proportional to the level of culture and civilisation in a given nation or social class. Among Anglo-Saxon peoples, around 15 percent have a negative Rh factor. Among American blacks, it occurs far less often than among white Americans. Among the Chinese and Indians, it is almost non-existent. It’s the law of nature’s balance. Nature tries to distribute things not equally, but in turn.’

Once, rummaging through Maksim’s books as he was wont to do, Boris found a battered Bible with the following passage underlined in red pencil:

2. And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
3. Who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
4. Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
5. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.
6. But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him,
7. And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not.
8. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.
9. And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many. Mark 5:2-9

When Boris asked Archbishop Pitirim - who was often to be found at the house under the golden cockerel - for an explanation, the prelate replied:

‘You see, the Gospels are symbolic texts. So all this should be understood metaphorically, not literally. Then it all becomes quite straightforward.’

‘But why, then, is it specifically underlined: “My name is Legion, for we are many”?’

‘Because there really are that many legionaries.’

In the evenings, close associates of Maksim would sometimes gather in the house under the golden cockerel - generals and colonels from the 13th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Despite their military uniforms, they had little in common with ordinary security officers. Almost all of them held academic degrees and bore the titles of Doctor or Professor in various fields of science and the arts, even literature. Intelligent faces, restrained manners, a calm academic tone.

Instead of vodka or wine, these Soviet Jesuits sipped tea with biscuits or carbonated water. In their conversations, ‘legionaries’ were often mentioned. One might have thought they were not Ministry of Internal Affairs officers but the general staff of some mysterious biblical legion - an evil spirit so strong that no chains could restrain it, yet one which the Soviet Inquisition had managed to harness in service of the Soviet state.

It seemed that these inquisitors were using some sort of code, in which ‘legionaries’ referred to real people. For convenience, they even subdivided the legion just as the Soviet Communist Party did: into members, candidates, fellow travellers and sympathisers.

Boris suspected that Maksim had simply transplanted the entire lexicon of the mediaeval Inquisition into the work of the 13th Department. But what was concealed behind this coded terminology?

At times, these odd MVD officers would seriously debate the Book of Revelation and the various interpretations of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. As it turned out, the first horseman, on the white horse, was War. The second - Revolution. The third, on the black horse - Famine. The fourth, on the pale horse - Death. But it was the second horseman, Revolution, riding the red horse, who most interested the MVD gendarmes.

Curious… For after the First World War came the October Revolution, followed by fratricidal civil war and the terrible famine years, when bullets, starvation and typhus-carrying lice mowed people down as in the Apocalypse. And the sequence was identical: war - revolution - famine - death. It seemed that the biblical Apocalypse contained some hidden inner logic.

From there, the MVD philosophers veered into pure metaphysics. They took Christianity and analysed it using the Soviet method of dialectical materialism. The result was dialectical Christianity. Then they took Soviet historical materialism and purified it through the prism of dialectical Christianity. What emerged was the science of all sciences - higher sociology.

Thus, Soviet history teaches that the first revolution in the world was the Spartacus revolt in Rome. But the professors of the 13th Department could not have cared less what Soviet

history claimed. From the standpoint of higher sociology, the first revolution began in the Bible - when Satan grew proud and rebelled against the authority of God. For this, he and his fellow revolutionaries were cast out of heaven, to stir up humanity on earth and incite them to every kind of disorder and revolt. And that, being so, fell under the remit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Then the MVD Jesuits, acting as amateur theologians, began discussing the Seven Deadly Sins, with the first sin - Satan's sin - being pride. These sins were termed deadly not as a turn of phrase, but because they literally led to death. To prove the point, the theologians would pat the pistols at their belts.

In opposition to the seven deadly sins stood the seven virtues: justice, temperance, wisdom, and so on. All this, they argued, must be known in order to understand and analyse the inner nature of the satanic spirit whose name is Legion, including members, candidates, fellow travellers and sympathisers.

The agitprop instructor from the Party Central Committee felt distinctly uneasy sitting and listening to such salon chit-chat among Party members - and not just any members, but high-ranking MVD officers. Fair enough, if they were merely dabbling in theology. But it got worse.

According to the theory of historical materialism, the French Revolution was driven by class struggle. But the pupils of Marshal of State Security Rudnev saw in that revolution, as in all others, nothing more than a parallel to the first celestial clash in the Bible: rejection of authority, nihilism, anarchy and rebellion. Instead of examining classes, they jumped straight to individuals - and began hunting for the devil.

At this point, using their dialectical Christianity - for the devil is a spirit - they sought the source of the spiritual anarchy that had prepared the ground for revolution. Thus they reached the famous philosopher, educator and Enlightenment thinker Rousseau, whose ideas formed the core of the Jacobin mindset.

As it happened, the great Rousseau was an extraordinarily dual-natured person - a true shapeshifter. In his writings, he was a genius of pedagogy. But in real life, he fathered five illegitimate children, deposited them in orphanages and wanted nothing more to do with them. Counts and nobles bowed before him. But driven by pride, in order to highlight his own intellect, he chose to bless these children upon a semi-literate simpleton whom this great educator could never succeed in teaching to tell the time of day, the days of the week, or the months of the year.

'Quite natural,' remarked Colonel Bykov of the state security service - also Doctor of Psychopathology. 'In the intimate realm, only that simpleton suited him. A normal woman would have slapped him in the face.'

In his philosophical writings, Rousseau passionately advocated for social justice, created a cult of romantic rebellion and glorified individualism. Again, the same pride. But in his personal life, this did not prevent him from betraying his friends, lying and even stealing. What he urged others to do, he did the opposite.

Thus, those who read his writings regarded him as little short of a second Christ. But those who looked at his deeds called him the Antichrist.

‘So which of them was right?’ asked Boris.

‘Both,’ replied General Toptygin, also a professor of history. ‘It’s called schizophrenia - a splitting of the personality. Something similar happened with the second Tolstoy.’ [314, 662]

‘The second one?’

‘Up to the age of fifty he was the first Tolstoy - a pure genius. After fifty, he became the second Tolstoy - a deranged genius, mentally ill. It was this second Tolstoy whom the Church excommunicated. And this same second Tolstoy was lauded by Lenin, who called him the mirror of the Russian Revolution.’

Whenever the brainiacs from Professor Rudnev’s think-tank found themselves in a tricky spot, they would, like in a good Jewish joke, immediately summon one of their clever Jews. In the case of Tolstoy, they promptly cited the apostles of the 13th Department, Professors Lombroso and Nordau, who asserted that genius and madness often coincide in the same point, or in the same head. Lombroso even made a special trip to visit Tolstoy and his pupil Nordau later wrote things about Tolstoy that are better left unquoted.

Then the philosophers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs turned again to the great Rousseau. Before his death, as is proper for sinners, Rousseau wrote a public confession in the form of a six-hundred-page book. Now General-Professor Toptygin cited this confession as evidence that Rousseau had personally consorted with the devil, who is forever meddling with his infernal ‘authority’ and cracked dubious jokes about the sinful philosopher that could only be expressed in a posthumous confession.

At this, Professor Toptygin quickly took cover behind the apostle of psychoanalysis, Freud, who taught that the devil hides in two places - in a man’s head and in his trousers.

‘So what exactly did Rousseau do?’ asked Boris.

‘He unbuttoned his trousers,’ the professor smirked, ‘and displayed his “authority” at the window - especially to children.’

‘What - as a pedagogical method?’

‘He was beaten half to death for that “pedagogy” several times. But nothing helped.’

‘What was the matter with him?’ the agitprop instructor asked, bewildered.

At this, Colonel Karpov, the psychopathology expert, began rattling off facts like an encyclopaedia:

‘In medicine, this is known as exhibitionism. In plain Russian, a “show-it-off”. In addition, Rousseau suffered from spermatorrhoea and hypospadias - congenital defects of the genital organs.’ [197]

‘Incidentally,’ added Professor Toptygin, ‘Rousseau used to write letters to God and place them under the cathedral altar instead of in the post box. But the real point is that he was the spiritual father of the French Revolution. And when scholars look back and re-examine things, they find that not only Rousseau, but nearly all the other leaders of that revolution were likewise legionaries.’

The general-inquisitor from the MVD tapped his forehead meaningfully:

‘That’s why Comrade Lombroso says that all revolutionaries are a bit touched…’

Then, using a similarly peculiar method, Professor Rudnev’s think-tank turned to analyse the spiritual sources of the October Revolution. And since the devil always works backwards and inside out, they pursued him in just such a fashion.

From Lenin and his Bolsheviks, they traced the line backwards to the origins of the Social-Democratic movement and to Russia’s first Marxist, Plekhanov, whose genealogical roots led back to Bakunin and from there to the Russian nihilists and anarchists of the late nineteenth century. At that time, the devil of revolution did not even bother hiding behind the mask of Marxism, social democracy or Bolshevism - he called himself openly by name: nihilist and anarchist!

‘After all, Bakunin himself later wrote that all revolutionaries are from the devil,’ said General Toptygin.

‘Incidentally, Bakunin’s great-great-granddaughter recently committed suicide in Italy,’ noted Colonel Karpov. ‘There are plenty of suicides in the families of Karl Marx and Trotsky too. That’s why the Church forbade the burial of suicides with normal rites - because they are often possessed by demons who drive them to take their own lives.’

As for Plekhanov, the first Marxist, the experts of the 13th Department, following the advice of the crafty Freud, did not just metaphorically ‘pull down Plekhanov’s trousers’, but even peeked under the skirt of his wife, Rosa Markovna. Why did this rebel need a Rosa Markovna, and not some Avdotya Petrovna?

Then they gossiped about the leader of the German Communists, Thälmann, whose wife was also some sort of Rosa and drew various biblical parallels.

Meanwhile, the agitprop instructor sat listening and thinking: ‘Good God, what a heretical interpretation of the entire history of communism! And in the mouths of those who are meant to safeguard that very communism!’ But the MVD gendarmes clearly knew their business. They had special authority - and in order to prevent future counter-revolutions, it was not the agitprop’s propaganda they needed, but the actual microbes of every revolution.

Sipping their tea, Marshal Rudnev’s Jesuits calmly discussed how the devil is, by nature, an individualist, a personalist and a self-loving egoist. But being the source of human weaknesses and vices, he is also an excellent psychologist and a cunning operator. To lend his schemes an air of respectability, he often cloaks them in virtue.

True, the devil avoids the old, wise Greek virtues such as justice, temperance and wisdom. He prefers to manipulate the younger, more inexperienced Christian virtues - namely, faith,

hope and love. These virtues serve chiefly as camouflage. Behind them lurk pride, envy and malice. And tangled among these are opportunists and appeasers like stupidity, ignorance, vanity, hunger and poverty.

Though the devil is a liar and the father of lies, and though he hides behind countless aliases and disguises - and at best, only his horns and tail can be seen - the specialists of the Soviet Inquisition spoke of the unclean spirit as an entirely objective reality. They knew certain identifying signs by which one could tell if someone was involved with the devil. But they kept silent about these signs, or else referred to them using a gibberish jargon of Latin terms mixed with unprintable obscenities.

Like true Jesuits, in order to appear objective, Marshal Rudnev's disciples were careful to stress that the devil and the legion are two quite different things - and that great caution is needed not to confuse the sinner with the saint, the saintly sinner with the sinning saint.

It turned out that the devil is always evil, but the legionaries possessed by him are not necessarily so. Most legionaries suffer under the devil's influence and even attempt to resist him. Some, having overcome his temptations, even become saints and righteous men, deserving only respect.

Take, for example, the famous storyteller Hans Christian Andersen - he too was a legionary, but belonged to the category of good fairies. That's why he wrote such lovely tales about good fairies. [600]

General-Archbishop Pitirim shook his head with regret:

'Yes, the devil was named the devil for good reason…'

When Maksim had been a student, leafing through old issues of *Niva* at his parents' home, he came across portraits of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. He used to gaze in the mirror and fantasise that his nose was like Schopenhauer's, or his chin like Nietzsche's - even though he only knew of them second-hand and from the portraits in *Niva*. Back then, they seemed to him proud geniuses, soaring above the mire of worldly life.

Now, judging by Maksim's library - full of references to Schopenhauer's pessimism and Nietzsche's gloomy musings on the 'blond beast' and the mantra of 'push the falling' - both of these misanthropes were under special surveillance by the 13th Department. Yet Maksim was interested less in their teachings than in their personal lives - searching for the personal roots of their pride, pessimism and hatred of mankind.

Boris turned to Colonel Karpov:

'What do you say about Nietzsche?'

The psychopathologist colonel began again, like a talking encyclopaedia:

'This son of a pastor, who hated Christianity, wrote The Antichrist, and was engaged in incest with his own sister. Many legionaries blame everything on poor innocent syphilis.'

Over the many years during which Marshal of State Security Rudnev had waged his personal battle with the devil, a certain resemblance had indeed appeared in his stern features - something of Schopenhauer, something of Nietzsche - a stamp of grim pride. But now he no longer looked in the mirror, and regarded his former idols with open disdain. The once-revered Nietzsche, the great rebel against God, was now to Maksim just a sick genius who paid for his defiance by spending the last ten years of his life in an asylum.

And in Schopenhauer, Maksim had underlined this particular sentiment: 'It would be hard to live in this world if there were no dogs, whose honest faces one can gaze upon with absolute trust.'

The same opinion, it seems, was held by the famous mediaeval alchemist, sorcerer and hermit Cornelius Agrippa, who was so attached to his black dog, Monsieur, that they ate at the same table and even slept in the same bed. And Maksim Rudnev, the black magician, played with his German shepherd so as not to feel lonely.

One way or another, even though Maksim no longer searched the mirror for likenesses to Schopenhauer or Nietzsche, the fact remained: ever since he had begun consorting with unclean forces, his face had clearly grown distorted.

While the inquisitors of the Ministry of Internal Affairs sipped their tea and philosophised, Boris rummaged through Maksim's library of demonology. In the books on Satanology, it was often mentioned that in the good old days, sabbaths of witches and warlocks were usually attended by various demons, disguised in the form of goats, pigs, or dogs.

There, too, was a tiny clipping from *Pravda*, dated from the 1930s. On the yellowed, crumbling scrap of paper, it was indignantly reported that the wretched English had once again imprisoned poor Mahatma Gandhi. The Indian saint and leader of passive resistance made no effort to resist even in prison. But he categorically demanded only one thing - that his beloved goat, whose milk sustained him, be placed in the cell with him. In the margin, a question mark in red pencil.

General-Professor Toptygin glanced over at what Boris was reading and remarked with dry scepticism:

'Frankly, in liberated India, they ought to put up a monument not to Gandhi, but to that goat.'

Nearby lay a photo album from the life of the famous modernist artist Pablo Picasso - a cunning dauber who earned millions from his scribbles. On his luxurious villa, Picasso, millionaire and Communist fellow traveller, also kept a beloved goat, which served him as a model. This model lived in modern style too: not in a barn, but in the artist's house.

'That goat is no ordinary goat,' explained the MVD professor. 'She's a secret agent of Colonel Karpov.'

Rummaging through the shelves, Boris came across a whole collection of abstruse poets, poetics and poeticlings who had swarmed the scene before the October Revolution. It all began with the Symbolists, who imported their tricks from France. Then came other conjurors - Acmeists, Futurists, Imaginists, and a whole swarm of other "-ists", like Emotionists, Presentists, Luminists, Parnassians, and so on.

Seated nearby on a Turkish divan was another brainiac from Professor Rudnev's think-tank - General of Medical Service Bykov, a cheerful fellow whose epaulettes gleamed with little snakes coiled around a goblet of poison. But beyond medicine, this cerebral fellow apparently had an interest in poetry as well. Now he joined Boris and approved:

'Yes, a delightful little gang. The Decadents. In this collection, there are such clever types as the biocosmists, who called their programme "Splashes of Bestialism". There were also the "Nothingists", who seemingly took their name from that very mysterious Nothing which annihilates. Their magazine was called *Dog Crate*. Evidently, in honour of that crate used to gather stray dogs and take them to the knacker's yard. The supplement to this magazine was heartbreakingly candid, and bore the succinct title: *Scum*.' [603]

'From the standpoint of higher sociology,' sighed Dr Bykov, 'this is simply anarchists and nihilists in literature. Yesenin and Mayakovsky came out of that same milieu. Which is why both of them ended up committing suicide.'

'But why exactly?' asked Boris.

'Well, take Yesenin. Why on earth did he marry Isadora Duncan, who was old enough to be his mother? And it's the same story with the rebel Rousseau: he dug up a lover almost twice his age and called her "mama"!'

At this, Colonel Karpov once again activated like a reference machine:

'When a man is drawn to a woman older than himself, it's usually a sign of the Oedipus complex - that is, a conscious or subconscious inclination towards incest with the mother. We call it the maternal complex. From this also comes Russian obscenity - *mat*, or mother-swearing. This maternal complex is often the root from which a whole range of secondary mental disorders springs. Hence, presumably, Yesenin's rebellion and alcoholism. A flight from himself, a flight into nothingness. A pity - a fine poet with a fine soul and he perished for nothing.' [601, 604]

'Mm, yes. And now we have to deal with his son, Yesenin-Volpin. And it's immediately clear what that reeks of.' Dr Bykov sniffed theatrically. 'A typical paranoiac. We put him in a psychiatric clinic, and he looks out the window, sees some cows and immediately starts calling them to rebellion - naturally, in verse:

Hey, comrades cows and bulls,
Look what the Bolsheviks have done to you!

Meanwhile, the agitprop instructor was leafing through a book called *The Disintegration of the Atom*, written in prose by émigré poet Georgy Ivanov and published in a tiny private print run in Paris - seemingly for friends. Among those friends, it turned out, was General Bykov of the MVD. [198]

'The best poet of the White émigrés,' the general praised. '"Fragrant branches of white acacia…"'

When Boris was still a schoolboy, he had, out of curiosity, poked around in his father's medical books on life's realities and delicate questions. But even in those specialised books,

there was nothing so blasphemous as what Ivanov savoured in his artistic prose. Small wonder this book, verging on pornography, was issued privately.

Holding *The Disintegration of the Atom* in his hands, Boris asked:

'What's that title got to do with anything? When it's about child molestation and necrophilia?'

'Symbolism,' replied the general calmly. 'It refers to the disintegration of atoms in the brain - mental illnesses. Among poets, these are almost occupational hazards. That's why the philosopher Democritus said he didn't consider anyone of sound mind a real poet. By the way, Yesenin-Volpin has a poem about a girl murdered in the bushes, which also stinks of necrophilia. And when we ban this sort of thing from being published, they shout that we're stifling "freedom of creativity".'

Boris returned *The Disintegration of the Atom* to the shelf. Next to it stood a collection by the Fuists, titled *Brain Slurry*. These merry Fuists, who had seemingly chosen their name from the sound *"fu"* or *"ptoo"*, confirmed the general's words with their own title, which described the mental breakdown quite precisely.

Some of the professors from the 13th Department wore on their epaulettes the insignia of the MVD's technical services - crossed hatchets, which originally came from the engineer corps and sappers, but which here more closely resembled the tools of the mediaeval Inquisition. Especially when listening to these professors discuss dialectical Christianity while gently stroking the pistols at their belts.

Delving into the primary sources of Christianity, they quoted biblical parables that called the devil the prince of this world - who promises some power, glory and wealth and others only grief and misfortune. From this, they inferred that most great men who achieved power had flirted with the devil. And others - citizens and soldiers - paid for it with their suffering.

Take Lenin, for example: he achieved power and glory. But how many millions paid for it with their lives? Abroad, they say it cost Russia fifty million human lives.

And that Lenin consorted with the devil - that, at least, was beyond doubt. Take those companions of his who fled abroad after the revolution and weren't eliminated during the Great Purge. In the émigré press, it was openly stated that nearly all of them ended up in various mystical and esoteric secret societies - which some called humanist and others satanist.

At that point, the émigré press would begin to stammer, unable to explain: what were these secret societies? What was the secret? What sort of humanism was this, that cost Russia fifty million lives?

But in Professor Rudnev's think-tank, they knew perfectly well what it was. And they also knew why the émigré press stammered. That's why, during the Great Purge, half the Union of Soviet Writers was packed off to Siberia. Because these engineers of the human soul had not fulfilled their civic duty and had failed to warn their fellow citizens - including young NKVD captain Rudnev - of the danger posed by Satan and the Antichrist.

At that point, the Soviet Jesuits promptly summoned another clever Jew to their aid - the apostle of existentialism Kierkegaard, the hunchbacked philosopher who claimed that in our time, the devil resides in printer's ink. That's why all these scribblers and ink-souls stammer when it comes to telling the truth about Comrade Satan.

Why, even the most famous Nobel laureate André Gide wrote that no book is written without the help of the devil. And you lot don't know this? Go on, look in the mirror! Aha - that's why you stammer. Not all of you, of course - but perhaps 75 percent.

Even Berdyaev, the God-seeker, whom some consider the greatest Russian philosopher of the twentieth century, wrote about the union of Satan and the Antichrist. And the result - the kingdom of the prince of this world. And you lot don't know that? Go on, take a look at your wives, your fathers, your mothers! Aha - that's why you stammer. Not all of you, of course - but a good half of that same 75 percent.

And you ink-souls think we don't know this? Why, we can count it on our fingers. And now we've got technology - electronic computing machines. And all of you, dears and darlings, are on our records: members, candidates, fellow travellers, even sympathisers.

General-Professor Toptygin paced the room, the new little hatchets on his epaulettes gleaming:

'This thing destroyed beautiful Hellas and proud Rome. And this same thing ruined imperial Russia. But we are the secret state police of the new, young Russia! And we won't stand on ceremony with this infection…'

Having listened to enough of this higher sociology, the agitprop instructor could no longer restrain himself:

'Look here, comrades. From the point of view of historical materialism, the driving forces of history are not God and not the devil, but class relations - that is, class struggle.'

'You see, young man,' said General-Doctor Bykov gently, 'if you simplify the historical process or progress to something like a conveyor belt stretched over millennia, then there are two basic forces that keep it moving. One force - at the beginning - creates the belt. The other - at the end - destroys it. That is God and the devil. But the trouble is that in order to maintain progress, to keep the belt moving, to make space for new, younger peoples or classes, the devil of progress has no choice but to cut off not the worst and weakest end, but the best - the one that has already had its time in the sun. That's where the tragic contradiction lies. Decadence... Disintegration... Where the very best turns into the very worst - into nothing. And class struggle is only one particular manifestation of this general law of human nature.'

The general nodded towards the fireplace, where a massive bronze sculpture stood on the marble mantelpiece:

'There it is - the engine of progress…'

It was a detail from a symbolic composition by the famous French sculptor Rodin. It was titled *The Gates of Hell* and depicted two figures in a rather suggestive pose. Boris tapped the bronze knee of the female figure:

‘The love here is clearly French. But I don’t see much of hell.’

However, the MVD’s Chief of Medical Service believed this frivolous sculpture held a profound meaning.

‘This is the main cause of most unhappy marriages, divorces and deformed children. And the victims, if they are not legionaries themselves, usually have no idea that the root of all their misfortunes lies behind these very gates. That’s why it’s called the Gates of Hell. By the way, all the literary prototypes of “superfluous men” come from these same gates.’

‘Excuse me,’ objected the agitprop instructor. ‘Isn’t it generally accepted that these superfluous men - Byron’s Childe Harold, Lermontov’s Pechorin - were victims of their social environment?’

‘They always blame the environment - shifting the blame from the sick onto the healthy,’ Colonel Karpov replied automatically. ‘Who was to blame for Lord Byron being born club-footed? Who was to blame for him cheating on his wife with his sister Augusta? The environment? And on top of that, he was obsessed with boys. That’s why he felt out of place everywhere - like his proud Childe Harold. That’s why Byron joined the Greek struggle against the Turks and died there. Classic self-destruction complex.’

‘And to understand Lermontov’s Pechorin, one must know that Lermontov’s grandfather committed suicide in a fit of madness. And Lermontov was drawn to Byronism because he too fell in love with his female relatives. Kindred spirits. And his duel? It was a disguised suicide. That’s why he wrote *The Demon* and *The Angel of Death*. Take Vrubel - he was obsessed with illustrations and stage designs for *The Demon*, and he ended up in a mental asylum.’

‘Ah, if only Lermontov had lived in our time…’ sighed General-Archbishop Pitirim. ‘We’d have assigned him a pair of our own guardian angels, to protect him from himself. Then we’d have introduced him to a suitable little lady. And all would have been well - like with Yevtushenko.’

Above the provocative *Gates of Hell* hung an old Goya engraving with the intriguing title *Will You Believe This or Not?*, showing two old witches who appeared either to be fighting or embracing passionately.

‘What about Goya?’ asked Boris. ‘Wasn’t he also considered a progressive artist?’

‘Oh yes. At first, he painted normally. Then he began to “progress”,’ agreed Dr Karpov. ‘He was drawn to bullfights, to the unclean spirit, began revelling in the horrors of war. In content - pathological, raw naturalism; in form - early modernism. A typical case of advancing brain-slurry.’

In such company, it was difficult for the agitprop instructor to argue with Professor Rudnev’s think-tank. These Jesuits viewed the whole history of civilisation through a special prism, which they called dialectical Christianity and higher sociology. For them, this was a magic crystal - one through which the product of human creativity was determined by analysing the personal life of its creator, especially the dark, hidden and little-known aspects of that life, the ones people usually avoid discussing.

In that darkness, the Soviet Inquisition hunted for the mysterious devil who manages the progress of civilisation and ensures it does not stagnate.

Boris looked around at all this and thought: ‘If only they drank vodka. Then you could say they were just drunk. But no - they’re sipping tea… and fondling their pistols like pets. “We,” they say, “are the secret police of the new Russia.” And Maksim plays with his cat and chuckles: “That’s my Doubting Thomas, you know.” Pah!’

And yet… and yet, on the shoulders of these obscurantists, general’s stars gleamed silently - not given away for nothing. And on their green tunics, though the war had long ended, newly minted medals clinked softly - also not awarded for nothing. [200]

Chapter 11: The Price of Immortality

I am seriously convinced that the world is ruled by complete lunatics.

From the diary of Lev Tolstoy

Worrying rumours were spreading through Moscow. It began on 13 January 1953, when Moscow newspapers carried the official announcement of the arrest of the Kremlin doctors, who were accused of preparing to poison the leaders of the Party and the government. Since a similarly incredible story of poisoner-doctors had occurred during the Great Purge of the 1930s, people immediately began to speculate that Stalin was preparing a second Great Purge and that mass arrests among the Kremlin elite would soon follow.

As most of the arrested doctors turned out to be Jews, it was widely believed that this could not be a coincidence. Some said that Stalin intended to exile all the Jews to Siberia, to the Jewish Autonomous Region in Birobidzhan. Others claimed that Stalin had taken offence at the poor Jews because of his own children - Yasha, Vasya and Svetlana - who, when it came to marriage, seemed to be irresistibly drawn to Jews. Stalin, it was said, suspected some sort of Zionist conspiracy behind it all.

On Soviet Army Day, 23 February, a large military parade took place on Red Square, as always, with the best units of the Moscow Military District brought into the capital. Normally, these Guard divisions would disperse immediately after the parade. But this time, for some reason, they remained in Moscow and began conducting what looked like manoeuvres. At the same time - whether as a supplement or as a counterweight to these army divisions - several special-purpose divisions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs troops appeared in the capital from nowhere. Red and green collar tabs darted around Moscow as if playing cat and mouse.

And again, people said that it all looked very strange.

One morning in the early days of March, the radio suddenly announced that the great leader and teacher of the Party and the government, the beloved friend and father of the Soviet people, Generalissimo Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin... At this point, the announcer's voice faltered, as if unable to pronounce what had been thought utterly impossible. [228, 607]

In short, the immortal Stalin had died. From some complicated illness, allegedly, as confirmed - of course - by a whole group of Kremlin doctors. At once, rumours circulated that Stalin had actually died three days earlier, but this had been concealed for fear of unrest. Recalling the arrest of the poisoner-doctors and the anticipated purge, people thought Stalin had died just in time - and it seemed that the mice had devoured the cat.

A small beer hall on Nogin Square was packed with people. A plumber in rubber boots, swaying slightly, was hugging a friend in a quilted jacket.

‘I already downed a quarter-litre during lunch break today. Right after the memorial rally. Thought I’d better hold a little wake. For our dear old dad.’

‘I was at it since morning,’ said the quilted jacket with a wink. ‘The moment I heard it on the radio, I ran straight out for a half-litre.’

At the table by the window, a cheerful gang of construction workers, already quite drunk, had gathered. One of them, long-nosed and teary-eyed, with a torn fur hat shoved back on his head, was telling a story with great enthusiasm.

‘So then... Before kicking the bucket, Stalin - being the sly one he was - decided to check out what life was like in hell and in heaven. You know, just to avoid picking the wrong address later. He got into a car and drove to hell first. From the gates of hell, out runs Beelzebub himself, bowing so low his face nearly hits the ground, writing stars with his tail and greeting him: “Good health, Comrade Stalin, our dear Joseph Vissarionovich!” Stalin replies: “Hello there, Comrade Devil! Now then, show me your kolkhoz.”’ The long-nosed man sniffed loudly. ‘So in hell, there are two doors. One to the left, one to the right. The devil takes Joseph Vissarionovich, our dear father, through the door on the left. Naturally - because Stalin always did things on the left. He walks in - and what does he see? On one wall there’s a poster: “Welcome - to the depths of hell!” On another wall, a slogan: “Under the leadership of the genius Stalin, we shall over-fulfil all our hellish plans by 300 percent!” And on the third wall, even worse: “Long live the wise leader and teacher of all devils, Comrade Stalin!” Well, Joseph Vissarionovich was, of course, quite taken with that infernal sycophancy. It tickled him in the liver.’

The listeners chuckled approvingly. The storyteller wet his throat with beer and went on:

‘So in the middle, there’s this table all laid out. And on that table, his favourite Kakhetian wine - straight from the barrel. And around the table, all his old mates - Caucasian “kinto”, thieves and bandits. All drunk, groping boys and belting out songs. And next to them, a young, fat lamb roasting - mouth-watering stuff. And a little orchestra of imps playing “Suliko”. Stalin liked it so much in hell that he even turned up late for Politburo duty.’ [218, 229, 232, 608, 611]

Then, for form’s sake, Stalin boarded a plane and flew to heaven. And he absolutely hated it there. All sorts of émigrés were sitting around - the very ones who had fled from him. And instead of “Suliko”, all they sang was “Alleluia”. That reminded him of his wife, Alliluyeva, whom he’d done in. And he realised that up here, he might even get his face smashed in. He took a look around and slipped out quietly before anyone noticed. The whole thing upset him so much that, to boost his own authority, he went and gave Vanka the pilot a beating.

The long-nosed man scratched his back and took another gulp of beer, as if he had personally accompanied Stalin to heaven.

‘So, anyway, once Joseph Vissarionovich, our dear old father, croaked, they stuck him on a donkey. Since now he’s not entitled to a car. And naturally, he’s stark naked - since in the next world there’s no need for clothes. He’s in a hurry, kicking the donkey with his heels. But the donkey, not being human, just plods along. Stalin approaches the gates of hell, bangs on the door with his fist: “Open up for the honoured guest!” Out comes the duty devil - now in an MVD uniform. And he’s no longer wagging his tail or even saying hello. He grabs Iosif by

the scruff and shoves him - but not into the door on the left. This time, into the one on the right.'

The storyteller paused, reached into his pocket for his tobacco pouch, tore off a bit of newspaper and rolled a cigarette.

'And then what?'

'And then poor old Ioska lands in the very furnace itself. As is proper for a servant of God, they stick him on pitchforks and dump him in a cauldron of tar to start with - for disinfection. Boiled him like an egg for about five minutes. Then fished him out with a ladle and sat his sinful backside down on a nice hot frying pan. Trotsky's sizzling away beside him. Ioska screams, struggles: "Hey! There's been a little mistake!" Trotsky asks: "What are you shouting about?" Stalin replies: "I was supposed to go left, but they sent me right!" Trotsky grins: "Left's the agit-point, the red corner. Those scoundrels learnt it from the Soviet government."' [219, 609]

A gloomy fellow in galoshes on bare feet was stirring his beer and grumbling:

'This isn't beer, it's all water. On normal days they pour a bucket of water into a barrel of beer. And today, for the holiday, looks like they added two.'

'Everything's a swindle, brother,' said his neighbour, a cheerful down-and-out with a look of Charlie Chaplin about him.

'You know why the beer's warm?' the gloomy one went on. 'They heat it up on a Primus stove in the back room. Makes more foam. Then they sell you the foam.'

'Our whole life's foam,' the cheerful one said, shaking his head.

The gloomy fellow concluded darkly:

'These days, only crooks live well. They arrested a pub manager recently. Know how much money they found under his mattress? Half a million! All made from beer foam. But the fool didn't know how to hide it. Now he's rotting in jail.'

'Prison's like a university,' said the cheerful man. 'I spent five years in that university.'

'What for?'

'For political illiteracy. That's what the investigator told me: "Off you go, you idiot - go learn some sense."'

'But what exactly for?'

'For a circumcision.'

'Oh, I used to shoot from a sawn-off when I was a partisan...' [231]

‘No, no, not that kind of “obrez”. I was born with a little defect. The tip wouldn’t open.’ [217, 610]

‘What tip?’

‘What do you think - the most important one. And when it came time for me to marry, I got worried: how can I be a groom if my groom-part doesn’t work? I went to a doctor. He said, “It’s nothing - just phimosis, a bit of a no-peeler. We’ll fix that in no time...” Before I knew it, snip-snip, he cut me.’

‘Ahh,’ said the gloomy one, ‘so that’s why they’re all circumcised...’

‘I was so thrilled afterwards that I could finally be a groom that I started showing everyone my snip and saying: “Look at that - a ticket to life! Like a brand-new Party card!”’ The cheerful man sighed heavily. ‘Then the NKVD picked me up. The investigator, Comrade Katsenelson, says: “Well, Citizen Kuznetsov, show us your Party card.” And just like that, he gave me five years for antisemitism. He was hinting that, after the revolution, being circumcised was like a Party membership. I said to him: “Excuse me, how can I be an antisemite if I’m a Jew myself? After the revolution, my parents changed our surname from Goldschmidt to Kuznetsov. And they didn’t circumcise me on time either - because of the revolution.” “Ah, so,” says Comrade Katsenelson, “now you’re agitating against the revolution too, are you?” He gave me a choice: ten years for counterrevolution or five years for antisemitism. I thought it over and picked antisemitism. Then, wouldn’t you know it, that same investigator - Comrade Katsenelson - ended up in the same camp as me. Got fifteen years - for Zionism or Semitism, I don’t know which. And the camp commandant called me in, as a specialist in antisemitism and asked: “Tell me, since you’re both in here now, what’s the difference between Semitism and antisemitism?” And I said: “Well, you can see for yourself: one gets you five years, the other fifteen.”’

Across the table sat a group of people with certain pretensions to being intellectuals, though this did not prevent them from swearing like dockhands. They were drinking *yersh* - that is, beer mixed with vodka. One of them, an intellectual in glasses and a greasy felt hat - which in a Moscow beer hall is a conspicuous marker of intelligentsia - was discoursing on lofty matters: [220, 233, 612]

‘In his time, Comrade Lenin wrote that once we build communism, money would no longer be needed. Since everyone would walk into an open shop and take whatever they wanted for free. And gold would become like rubbish. Then they’d collect up all the gold from everywhere and, to meet the needs of the working people, build a public lavatory on Red Square out of it. And so large that this golden toilet would match the greatness of our communist epoch - with room for a thousand people at once.’

‘Did Lenin really write that?’ asked another intellectual sceptically, wearing a coat with a dog-fur collar.

‘Fact!’ said the hat. ‘Only Stalin later crossed it out.’

‘What a gangster,’ said the dog-fur collar. ‘Too stingy with the gold.’

‘And Lenin definitely wanted that golden lavatory to be the most cultured in the world,’ the man in the hat continued developing his point. ‘So that the working people in that lavatory wouldn’t be in a rush, like under capitalism, but could relax in comfort. Maybe watch a film or listen to music while they were at it.’

‘Now that’s bliss, for f-’s sake!’ exclaimed a third intellectual, with a tie knotted round an old soldier’s tunic.

A fourth companion, hatless, without glasses and without a tie - evidently a semi-intellectual - remarked more realistically:

‘There’d be a queue for that toilet longer than the one at Lenin’s Mausoleum.’

‘And they’d only let you in with a Party card,’ added the dog-fur collar regretfully.

The man in the hat frowned and changed his tone.

‘I used to think about that golden toilet a lot,’ he said in a low voice. ‘I believed in Lenin’s golden toilet, and even joined the Party. Then, during the famine of 1933, people began taking off their wedding rings and pawning them at Torgsin, just to save their children from starving to death. And I, at a Party cell meeting, made the mistake of asking: “And what about that golden toilet Lenin promised?” Well, instead of Lenin’s golden toilet, I ended up in Stalin’s concentration camp. Ten years in the gulag. Caught tuberculosis.’ [221, 234, 613]

‘Never mind, I was inside too,’ said the dog-fur collar. ‘For embezzling socialist property.’

‘What did you pinch?’

‘Well, everywhere they’re saying now that the factories belong to the workers. So I took a handful of nails from my factory to mend my fence. And I got eight years for that. In the camp I paid for each nail with a tooth - they all fell out from scurvy.’

‘If you’ve never done time, you’re not a real person,’ declared the tie with authority. ‘I don’t trust anyone who’s never served.’

‘What were you in for?’

‘For dialectics. I was chairman of a kolkhoz. The bulls didn’t meet the breeding plan. And since you can’t put bulls in prison, dialectically they grabbed me. “Why,” they said, “didn’t you help the bulls yourself?” So I got five years for sabotage.’

‘I only got six months,’ admitted the semi-intellectual in the cap, somewhat sheepishly. ‘To teach me not to be late for work.’

‘The camp is the school of communism,’ said the hat, topping up his beer with vodka. ‘All the Leninist guard were in there with me - the brains of the revolution, the eagles. And they used to recall their comrade Lenin. For example, Comrade Lenin taught that it’s better to destroy a hundred innocent people than to let one guilty man escape. These Leninist guards would recall those golden Leninist words and glance at each other: so which one of us is the guilty one then?’

‘Did Lenin really say that?’

‘Absolutely. At a Cheka meeting on 14 January 1918. And later Comrade Lenin also wrote that if, for the sake of communism, it was necessary to destroy nine-tenths of the entire population - meaning us poor sods - then the Bolsheviks should not hesitate for a second. If you don’t believe me, have a look in Lenin’s Collected Works, Volume 11, page 702.’

‘You’ve really got Leninism down by heart,’ marvelled the dog-fur collar.

‘Comrade Lenin also said he didn’t give a damn about Russia.’

‘If he said that now,’ said the tie, ‘he’d end up in jail as a rootless cosmopolitan - ten years with sprinkles.’

‘And then Comrade Lenin also complained that there were too few clever people in Russia. And if there were any, they were almost always either Jews or people with some Jewish blood. Check Gorky’s memoirs of Lenin, 1924 edition, page 20. And what do I see around me: all these Leninist geniuses are sitting in the camp with me. I worked in the logging teams and all these brains were somehow listed as bricklayers and sent to the brick factories. Instead of rebuilding the world, they were hauling bricks on their own backs.’

‘And they made the criminal thugs brigade-leaders over the politicals. I remember one bandit there, Fedka the Cross-Eyed - a real artist in tormenting people. He’d grab some Leninist eagle and interrogate him: “Hey, you counter, guess which of my eyes is glass - right or left? What, cat got your tongue? Look, which one has the humane gaze - that’s the glass eye!” And *whack* across the back with his stick.’ The speaker shivered as if remembering the Siberian frost. ‘Fedka the Cross-Eyed especially tormented our bricklayers: “Hey, you counters, you played with Comrade Lenin at red stars. Now tell me, what’s a blue star? I’m a straight-up bandit, but they stuck me with some dirty political case too - ‘Blue Star’. Got ten years for banditry and ten more for this ‘Blue Star’. And I don’t even know what the hell this ‘Blue Star’ is. That’s why I’ve got this grievance eating me alive - in the liver and the spleen. Makes you want to cry!” And *whack* again. The bricklayers haul their bricks and keep quiet. And Fedka rages: “You counters! I hear some of you are inside for this ‘Blue Star’ too. So you, stargazers, at least know what it is. I’m sitting here guilty without guilt. Now tell me - what is this ‘Blue Star’? What, cat got your tongues?” *Whack* again.’

The saboteur, who had been imprisoned for not helping the bulls fulfil the breeding plan, brought over a fresh mug of beer and said:

‘After the revolution, Gorky wrote in print that Lenin and his lot were a bunch of lunatics. And when I was in Kolyma, there were loads of these Leninists. All such sickly intellectuals: one cross-eyed, another limping, another hunchbacked, another with a twitchy mouth. And we saw with our own eyes how many of them went mad. Not on paper, but for real. Some said it was from the camps - couldn’t take it. Others said their brains had always been worm-eaten, with a crack in them. And when life gives that crack a good jolt, like in a camp, it turns into full-blown madness. They’d just take such people into the forest and shoot them, like rabid dogs.’

The gloomy fellow in galoshes on bare feet joined the conversation and said darkly:

‘Well, they did say Lenin had syphilis. And now they say Hitler had it too. Strange how these syphilitics end up so high up.’

The cheerful down-and-out, the one who looked like Charlie Chaplin, objected:

‘Others say Lenin was a quarter-Jew. And some say Hitler was too.’

‘Where’d you get that from?’ asked the dog-fur collar doubtfully.

‘Well, I did five years as an antisemitism specialist,’ shrugged Charlie Chaplin. ‘Everyone came to me with the latest news. With Lenin, it’s certain: his maternal grandfather was Feldsher Alexander Blank, a Jewish convert from Odessa. When Lenin got sick, the doctors couldn’t figure out what the illness was. Some kind of brain paralyses, hereditary. So they started digging into his ancestors and uncovered this Jewish grandfather. But that’s a state secret.’

‘Aha, that’s why Lenin kept praising clever people with Jewish blood,’ said the former owner of Soviet factories. ‘He was praising himself, in other words. And what about Hitler?’

‘They say the same...’

‘They say all sorts - like cows lay eggs,’ said the man in the hat, tipping his hat back on his head. ‘I heard so much in the camps. One Trotskyist swore that during the Great Purge there was a top-secret 13th Department in the NKVD. So secret that even within the NKVD no one knew about it. Then they shot almost the whole NKVD - and that was the 13th Department’s doing, supposedly, even though it “didn’t exist”.’

‘Another Trotskyist swore that all the guards in the 13th Department were deaf-mutes. And that during interrogations, they brought people in stark naked. Imagine - they lead in Zinoviev, Bukharin, or Rykov - the brains of the revolution - totally naked down the corridor. With a string tied to the tip. And you sit in front of the interrogator as naked as at the doctor’s. And the interrogators were dressed like doctors, in white coats. And the first thing they examined was the tip...’

‘Like a Party card,’ added Charlie Chaplin. ‘Makes sense. Especially with Trotskyists.’

Through the tables wandered a drunken beggar, accompanying himself on a little accordion, singing a camp song:

Comrade Staaalin, you’re a clever fella,
In every science you’re the top scholar. But I’m just a poor Soviet prisoner,
And my best mate is a grey Bryansk wolf.

The man in the hat, who had once dreamed of a golden communist toilet, now summed it all up:

‘Yes... To promise people a golden lavatory, then say nine-tenths of them can be shot - for that you truly have to be mad. And here we are, seeing the results on our own skin...’

And the drunk beggar sang:

First rain, then snooow, then midges swarm over,
And we in the taiga from dawn until dawn. You sparked the flame from a little ember -
Thanks a lot - I'm warming my bones at the fire.

The former factory owner, who recalled Lenin's promises, burst into a coughing fit and hoarsely said:

'Now they say Stalin will be laid next to Lenin in the Mausoleum. If there were justice in the world, Stalin should be chucked into that golden lavatory Lenin promised. So that everyone could give him what he deserved. According to relics, the unction. Now that would be dialectics.' [222]

'Yes, not a bad idea,' said a gaunt man with a weary face and an old army jacket. He had been sitting quietly over his beer. The jacket revealed the insignia of a disabled veteran on an old soldier's tunic.

The drunken beggar wandering among the tables took off his cap and began collecting donations. Then he stopped beside the invalid with the weary face and, with the casual ease of the poor, tapped him on the shoulder:

'Why so glum, mate? As if you've really lost your own father. Sitting there all mournful, like some Kazan orphan. Let me sing you something cheerful, lift your spirits. Go on, pick a tune...'

The man in the hat pulled it low over his brow and, musing like someone recalling an unfulfilled dream of a golden toilet, smeared spilled beer across the table with his finger. The tipsy accordionist, taking the request, stretched out his instrument and began singing in a hoarse voice:

With all my soul I loved a maid,
For her I'd gladly give my liiiife...

The semi-intellectual in the cap laid his head on the damp table and slept peacefully. Charlie Chaplin nodded in time with the song and smiled sadly at something.

I'll paint her room with turquoooise gleam,
And a golden bed I'll make for the niiiight...

The saboteur, imprisoned in place of the bulls, was salting his beer and watching the bubbles rise with great concentration. From the loudspeaker above the bar came snatches of mournful speeches.

I'll deck it out just like a dream,
And give it all for loooove...

The gloomy man in galoshes had switched from beer to vodka. He pulled a half-bottle from his pocket and drank straight from the neck. And the accordionist, in a rattling voice, sang an old tune about betrayed love:

But if a doubt should enter my heaaaart,
That my darliiiing might be untruuuue...

In the stuffy air of the pub drifted the scent of wet felt boots and melting snow, tobacco smoke and a drunken, discordant din. The accordionist stretched his instrument to the limit:

Then as punishment, the whole world will shaaake,
Even Saataaaan will shudder toooo...

The dreamer in the hat stretched and yawned. The disabled veteran with the weary face silently gave the accordionist some money for beer, pulled on his old ushanka, groaned as he rose from the table and headed for the exit.

Although March had already arrived, it was still winter-cold in the streets of Moscow. Heavy icicles hung menacingly from rooftops and cornices. Street sweepers lazily scraped away the dirty ice and rubbish that had built up under the snow over the winter. The first to sense the coming of spring were the irrepressible sparrows. They puffed themselves up on the rooftops and chattered like delegates of the United Nations, arguing over global problems that did not depend on them.

While the sparrows on the rooftops were busy with their sparrow affairs, beneath one of those roofs, in the dissection hall of the Kremlin hospital, stood a large enamelled bathtub, usually used for bathing patients and, on the side, by the orderlies for washing their stockings. Now, in the absence of any more suitable container, the tub was filled with formalin solution.

Floating in that solution, awaiting embalming, was the naked corpse of an old man with yellowed, shrivelled skin. No one had closed his eyelids and the corpse's dead eyes stared meaninglessly at the ceiling. From the mouth, frozen in a death grimace, protruded crooked and decayed teeth, as if the man had been afraid to visit the dentist. To prevent the body from floating to the surface, stones had been tied to the neck and legs for ballast - the same kind of stones used by simpler Muscovites to weigh down barrels of sauerkraut. [99]

Strictly speaking, it was not a complete corpse, but the remnants of one, prepared for embalming. The opened ribcage and eviscerated abdominal cavity somewhat resembled a skinned ram hanging from a butcher's hook. For embalming, the veins must be filled with formalin and this requires that all blood be drained from the body, as in kosher butchery. The entire corpse had therefore been processed according to kosher technique and bore thick traces of the anatomist's knife.

On the dissection table, jars containing dissected body parts had been carefully arranged. In one jar floated a brain, dead and suspended in formalin - a brain that had recently ruled half the world. In another jar, something else unidentifiable sloshed about. When nurses and orderlies passed by, they cast curious glances at this jar, then quickly turned away and giggled.

Nearby stood a general-major of the medical service, a relatively young man with horn-rimmed glasses and a white coat, under which the uniform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was visible. When the telephone rang on the neighbouring table, he took off his bloodied rubber gloves and picked up the receiver.

‘Hallo... Doctor Bykov speaking.’

‘Well, Ivan Vasilich, how are things going over there?’

‘I’ve just finished the autopsy.’

‘I just want to check everything one last time, so nothing gets overlooked. With Lenin’s corpse, the doctors fiddled about until it started stinking. What about the endocrine glands?’

‘All secrets have been dissected.’

‘All eight?’

‘Yes.’

‘What does the preliminary examination show?’

‘As expected. Marked hypertrophy of some, and typical underdevelopment of others.’

‘Good. Send all those secretions straight to the lab for final analysis. Now then - how about his left hand?’

‘Congenital cachexia. A classic dry-hander.’

‘You’re sure it wasn’t some childhood injury?’

‘They all say that, to hide it. But this is congenital. Moreover, the left hand is entirely inflexible.’

‘Yes, that’s why he was rejected for military service during the First World War. Wilhelm II, who started that war, was also a dry-hander. Oh dear, oh dear. They can’t fight themselves, these dry-handers, but when it comes to starting wars - they’re first in line. And the toes?’

‘Two are fused together. In effect, he has four toes.’

‘Yes, that was already noted in the gendarme reports. And what is your overall conclusion?’

‘Everything’s clear. But something else concerns me... His mother’s first child died in infancy. So did the second. And the third. Essentially, three stillbirths. He was the fourth and the only one who survived. That’s quite a suspicious combination. The father was an alcoholic and a drifter. And alcoholism often hides all sorts of Caucasian tricks. It’s quite possible the mother knew perfectly well why her first three children were stillborn. In such circumstances, women often resort to certain tricks... She was twenty at the time, working as a day-labourer in wealthy households. I wouldn’t be surprised if, while scrubbing floors, she raised her backside for one of the masters. Unfortunately, we don’t have the father’s blood group to test...’

‘We have to remember that the Caucasus is home to a quarter of a million Mountain Jews. It’s highly suggestive that all three of his children had mixed marriages with Jews. His first

wife's family was mixed with Jews. And his third wife - Rosa Kaganovich. Is this the voice of blood?'

'Mm-hmm,' said the voice on the line. 'And there's also something strange about the complete absence of photographs of his father. Back then, it was normal to be photographed at least once in your life, say at your wedding. That would allow us to check whether there's even partial resemblance between father and son. But in this case, the father is almost a total blank. It looks like the son deliberately covered his tracks. Same story with Hitler's grandfather: instead of a grandfather - a white patch.'

The MVD's general-major of medical service sat down in a chair and crossed his legs.

'Only deductive psychoanalysis remains. We know the father beat the mother and the son half to death. Maybe even the father himself had doubts about the boy's paternity. He died soon after. And the mother, though still relatively young, never remarried. It seems men no longer interested her. But the son, as Comrade Freud would say, clearly had a mother complex.'

'Mm-hmm,' said the voice in the receiver. 'And there's something else notable: the mother definitely wanted to make him a priest. Hitler's mother also dreamed of making her son a pastor. And Dzerzhinsky wanted to become a Catholic priest.'

'Yes, the picture is clear. And then, those mixed marriages among his children. That's why the old man flew into such rages.'

'All right, Ivan Vasilich, what about our medicines?'

'Working perfectly.'

'What did the autopsy of the internal organs show?'

'The usual: progressive liver carrioma, altered blood metabolism and cerebral vascular thrombosis as the result.'

'Is the brain dissected?'

'Yes. And the power complex too. The orderlies are all running around admiring it. They think it's the strongest in the world.'

'And the mummy - is it coming along?'

'Like a lightly salted cucumber. But there are still some useless innards left over. What shall we do with them?'

'Once upon a time, they fired some tsar's ashes out of a cannon. But that's no longer fashionable...'

'Put them in a decorative urn?'

‘No, no... What if some curious descendants later find traces of our medicines in there? By the way, American radio is already hinting that Stalin may have been “helped” to die. Imagine the nerve!’

‘All right, then we’ll burn it all and flush it down the drains,’ said the MVD’s general-major of medical service. ‘*Sic transit gloria mundi*...’

‘Amen,’ said the voice in the receiver.

The invalid in the old soldier’s jacket sighed heavily and put down the receiver. On the other side of the table sat a small, bald man in the uniform of a Marshal of State Security of the USSR, with an old-fashioned pince-nez on his shiny nose. He had entered the room at the end of the conversation.

‘Congratulations!’ said the bald man. ‘It’s lovely to see Stalin’s favourite and secret adviser burying his benefactor with tears in his eyes. So touching! Makes even me want to cry.’ He cast a mocking glance at the old army jacket and the battered ushanka lying on the table. ‘I envy you, honestly. You walk around Moscow like some Harun al-Rashid. Breathing the fresh air. And I, poor wretch, daren’t even poke my nose outside. Your extraordinary modesty is, at times, quite convenient. Seeing you,’ he went on, ‘one can take comfort in the fact that the proletarian state is truly run by proletarians - who maintain close contact with the people. Not by some bourgeois, rotten intellectuals like Lenin. Or half-baked seminary students like Stalin - rest his soul, by your prayers...’ [225, 243, 622]

The invalid in the army jacket opened a concealed door in the wall leading to a bathroom, went to the sink and began washing his hands. The bald man settled deeper into his chair:

‘Even though - you and I - are the only two Marshals of State Security in the USSR... Even though Stalin placed you behind my back... Now, with Stalin dead, I, as Minister of Internal Affairs, am technically your immediate superior. So once you’ve washed your proletarian hands, I’d like to have a heart-to-heart with you...’

He paused, then continued in a more confidential tone.

‘Frankly, Maksim Aleksanych, I really admire your approach to the job. The Crown of Monomakh clearly doesn’t tempt you. Looking at you, anyone can see that you prefer a simple ushanka. Yet each of the contenders for the crown knows full well that they will need you - like Fouché and Talleyrand.’ [242, 245, 624]

The USSR’s Minister of Internal Affairs took a handkerchief from his pocket and polished his pince-nez.

‘By the way, why didn’t you, the Red Cardinal and spiritual adviser to Stalin, go and watch the old man die? Of course, for you it wasn’t just a man dying, but an entire era - and you felt sorry. But it was rather a sight. For example, Malenkov suddenly threw up. I can understand Napoleon throwing up when they sent him to Saint Helena. Is this fat-bottomed fellow trying to be Napoleon too?’ The secret police minister was in high spirits and talked endlessly: ‘He - the boss - was paralysed. But his tongue still worked. Pity you didn’t hear how he swore. Like a real cobbler. And what a heavenly pleasure it was - such power before you and such helplessness. And before your eyes, that power ebbs away, ebbs away... Drop by drop... Until

it becomes nothing... Speaking of which, may I have another look at that piquant little document? That list you showed me...?'

The first deputy minister took off his jacket, then fetched a sheet of paper from the safe and placed it on the table.

'Written in his own hand,' muttered the minister, studying the page. 'But the old man was clearly starting to lose his marbles. So, I'm at the top of the list. What an honour!'

The leather armchair was so large and deep that the minister slung one leg over the armrest and almost reclined. Then he said softly, almost affectionately:

'Or maybe someone dictated this list to him?... Maybe you dictated it to him? Like you used to. Though in this case, it doesn't look like your hand.' The minister looked up at his deputy. 'Maksim Aleksanych, dear soul, since you're the only person Stalin trusted, tell me - why did he plan a second purge?'

'They say that power corrupts...'

'Aha, so that's why you keep refusing promotions. Afraid of being corrupted?'

'No. But Stalin knew that it isn't power that corrupts people - on the contrary, the most corrupt people are the ones who are most drawn to power. Due to certain dark laws of nature. And unfortunately, they often achieve it.'

'Yes, we see that in his own example.'

'That's why Stalin believed it necessary to periodically cut off the heads of all those who'd risen to power. Hence his plan for a second general purge.'

'In theory, quite right. But now let me ask you a personal question. Knowing your sincere devotion to Stalin and your conservative approach... Why, in this case, did you do the opposite? Instead of liquidating the Politburo members one by one, according to this list, like you used to, you showed the list to us - and liquidated Stalin himself. Why?'

'Very simple. As you yourself said - the old man had begun to go mad.'

'Yes, indeed... For example, this business with the Jews. He suddenly got the idea that it wasn't the Jews themselves who were most dangerous, but the mixture - the half-Jews and quarter-Jews from mixed marriages. You can recognise Jews at once, but the mixture always hides. He even looked at me and said, "What's with your nose, Katso? You got a plum there? Maybe you're one of them too?"' The minister rubbed the tip of his nose with a finger. 'I think it was his children's fault. They were all drawn to Jews. And his favourite, Svetlana - she finished him off entirely. He had one of her fiancés exiled to Siberia and she went and found herself another - also a Jew. Then he started imagining some Zionist plot and cooked up the doctors' conspiracy.' [240, 619]

'Classic persecution mania,' said Stalin's former secret adviser, shaking his head sadly. 'Progressive paranoia. A professional disease of great men. The price of immortality.'

‘So you decided it was time to clean him out. Well, Maksim Aleksanych, you saved many lives by doing so - mine included. I just don’t know how to thank you, dear soul. The old man showered you with medals so generously that the only one you don’t have yet is “For the Rescue of the Drowning.”’ The minister checked his watch. ‘Well, I must be off to the Party Central Committee’s memorial session. Time to weep and sprinkle ashes on our heads.’

As he rose from his chair, he remembered his sciatica, which had been tormenting him in recent days and that he was on the honorary list of government members who would bear the coffin containing the embalmed mummy to the Mausoleum. Rubbing his back with his hand, he turned to his first deputy and grimaced:

‘Oh dear, the back’s acting up again. Your dead man, but I have to carry him. You’ve pulled it off again. Why are you always so lucky?’

As he rose from the armchair, he remembered his sciatica, which had been tormenting him over the past few days and the fact that he had been included in the list of honourable government members who would carry the coffin with the embalmed mummy into the Mausoleum. Rubbing his lower back with his hand, the minister turned to his first deputy and grimaced:

‘Oh dear, my back’s going again. It’s your corpse, yet I’m the one who has to carry him. You've pulled it off again. Why is it you always come out on top?’

Chapter 12. The Formula of Power

And the devil said unto Him:
I will give Thee power over all these kingdoms, and their glory,
for it is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it;
if Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine.

Luke 4:6-7

After Stalin's remains were embalmed and laid beside Lenin in the Mausoleum on Red Square, on the other side of the Kremlin wall the game of cat and mouse resumed.

Before long, a brief announcement appeared in the newspapers on behalf of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, stating that the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Internal Affairs, L. P. Beria, was relieved of his posts and that his case had been referred to the Supreme Court. For fifteen years, Beria had stood at the head of the Soviet state security organs. And now, it suddenly emerged that he was the chief saboteur and a foreign spy. Thus, the mice once again devoured the cat.

Following the downfall of such a major saboteur as the Minister of Internal Affairs himself, it was only natural that all his closest associates, deputies, and department heads began to be purged. Therefore, reading the newspapers, Boris grew seriously concerned for Maksim's fate.

But the 13th Department was as if under a spell. Stalin had died under rather strange circumstances. Beria had been arrested as a spy. One after another, all his aides were being imprisoned. Yet on Marshal Rudnev's chest, for reasons unknown, a second gold star of Hero of Socialist Labour had appeared. Only, the expression on the hero's face was so sour, it was as if he had swallowed something vile.

In addition, Maksim now also wore a simple medal 'For the Rescue of Drowning Persons'. And the most amusing part was that this silly medal clearly gave Maksim genuine pleasure. This medal is awarded to boys who save each other while swimming. Yet Marshal Rudnev had pinned it higher than all the USSR's highest orders and, like a boy, clearly took delight in it.

After Stalin's death and Beria's arrest, even the Soviet press allowed itself some mild criticism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Consequently, when visiting the house under the golden cockerel, Boris also took a rather critical view of his elder brother's mediaeval working methods.

Who in our enlightened age seriously believes in God? Naturally, only backward people. And it was entirely natural that Boris Rudnev, an agitprop instructor, believed neither in God nor in the devil.

However, when in Maksim's office and rummaging through his library of black magic books, Boris often noticed that alongside various pieces of mediaeval devilry, keys to the darkest secrets of Soviet power were kept.

Take, for example, the following story. Shortly before Stalin's death, a wave of bloody purges swept across Eastern Europe, during which a good half of the communist chieftains who ruled over the countries of the new people's democracies were hanged, with the Rajk trial receiving particular notoriety. Since many of these fallen princelings were Jews, the Western press raised an alarm about antisemitism.

After Stalin's death, the blame for these antisemitic excesses was placed on the other half of the communist princes, led by Mátyás Rákosi and Ana Pauker, who themselves were Jews, and they were quietly removed from the political stage. It turned out that the main antisemites were the Jews themselves, who in their struggle for power destroyed each other. One way or another, the red princes devoured one another like spiders in a jar. [627]

But the point was that Maksim's office held folders stamped 'Top Secret', from which it was evident that the 13th Department was monitoring these princely feuds in Eastern Europe very closely. And not merely observing, but taking action.

Most curious of all was that in these folders, the liquidated leaders of the fraternal communist parties were classified in the same category as... the leaders of the Mau Mau, a secret sect of black terrorists engaged in the slaughter of whites in Kenya. The central mystery of the Mau Mau, moreover, lay in certain repulsive oaths and bloody rites linked to matters of sex, which Western newspapers - usually eager for such sensations - did not dare describe. It was something akin to circumcision. [278, 626]

On the other hand, the Western press did report that the red dictator of Hungary, Rákosi, employed rather strange methods in political struggle: his main political opponent, János Kádár, was not merely circumcised but outright castrated. Alongside this, a factual note from the 13th Department's specialists: it turns out that in 1920, after the failure of the Hungarian revolution, Rákosi, née Aron Kogan, spent about a year in a mental asylum in Austria. And directly from that asylum, he ended up working at the Moscow Comintern. [279, 281, 629]

But that was not all. In analysing the political genealogy of the leaders of the fraternal communist parties, the Soviet inquisition, besides the Mau Mau, also reached... Baba Yaga. Yes, Baba Yaga! [247, 277, 625]

At that moment, seated in Maksim's office was Lieutenant General of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Technical Service Ilya Sergeyevich Kuroshchupov, professor of history and concurrently chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR. In the 13th Department, as in a true inquisition, many officers changed their surnames. Thus, General-Professor Kuroshchupov symbolically emphasised with his name that he felt up some hens.

Upon reaching Baba Yaga, Boris could no longer contain himself and exclaimed in frustration:

'Listen, Ilya Sergeyevich, since I work in agitprop, I'm meant to agitate for and propagate communism. Yet here you are comparing the leading communist Ana Pauker with Baba Yaga! But that's from children's fairy tales! The little hut on chicken legs!'

'Quite so,' the general-professor nodded calmly. 'By "little hut on chicken legs" was apparently meant the stilted dwellings of the negroes.' [246]

‘Negroes again?’

‘Yes. The Baba Yaga from Russian fairy tales did not live in Russia at all, but in Central Africa. She was the queen of a tribe of cannibals. The tribe was called “Yagga”. Hence Queen Yagga. This later became the Russian man-eater Baba Yaga.’ As a proper professor, the general explained thoroughly: ‘In the seventeenth century, missionaries of the Capuchin order arrived in Central Africa along with the Portuguese army. At that time, in the Congo region, the colony of Angola was established. The native king of Angola was one Ngola Mbande. And he had a beloved sister named Nzinga. Later this dear sister poisoned her brother and became queen herself.’ [282]

Seated next to General Kuroshchupov was General Bykov of the Ministry of Internal Affairs’ medical service.

‘Out of similar motives,’ he remarked, ‘Ana Pauker had her husband Marcel executed, accusing him of Trotskyism.’

‘Later this Queen Nzinga,’ the general-professor continued, ‘carried everywhere in her bag, as a lucky talisman that conferred power, the bones of her beloved brother - the shinbones. This, apparently, is the origin of that at first glance puzzling expression in the Russian tale of Baba Yaga: “Baba Yaga - bony leg.” Nzinga ruled for quite a long time - over thirty years - and spent most of that time at war with the Portuguese.’ [283]

‘A typical Amazon,’ the medical general interjected. ‘By the way, Ana Pauker also liked to dash about with a pistol on her backside.’

The historian general drew on his papirosa and went on:

‘In the end, however, the Capuchins converted Nzinga to Christianity. Later, two Capuchins, Brother Antonio de Gaeta and Brother Giovanni de Montecuccolo, wrote an entire book about this Nzinga. Through church channels, this book reached Russia, and thus, it seems, from a negro cannibal queen emerged the tale of the man-eater Baba Yaga.’ [284]

‘Well, if you know all this so well,’ said the agitprop instructor, ‘then tell me, why does Baba Yaga ride in a mortar and sweep away her tracks with a broom?’

‘For that, you need to understand the symbolism of ancient pagan cults,’ replied the medical general. ‘In ancient India, the symbols of life - more precisely, of the regeneration of life - were the snake and the lotus. In ancient Rus’, these were represented by the mortar and the broom. They are phallic symbols of the male and female principles.’

‘And what has that to do with Baba Yaga?’

‘Hmm, she rides in a mortar and sweeps away her tracks with a broom... Symbolically, this is a rather precise definition of that particular category of women - from Baba Yaga right up to Ana Pauker.’

‘Ivan Vasilich, don’t confuse me with symbolism. Speak plainly.’

The medical general shrugged. On his epaulettes, a snake coiled around a cup of poison glittered mockingly.

‘If I speak plainly, you’ll understand even less.’ And on the historian general’s shoulders, the crossed axes of the Ministry of Internal Affairs technical service glinted softly.

‘You see, Boris Aleksanych, when a person - even the most intelligent - confronts these problems, he always feels a bit foolish. That is why these are called the accursed questions.’

Here, as always when dealing with any delicate problems, the MVD inquisition whistled for its clever Jews to assist.

‘In the language of Comrade Freud,’ the medical general smirked, ‘“rides in a mortar and sweeps away her tracks with a broom” indicates a complex of latent, repressed, or overt homosexuality. And that is often linked with sadism. And sadism, in turn, is the root of what is known as the power complex. It’s a sort of formula of power. That is why, for the sake of power, Queen Nzinga eliminated her brother, and the red queen of Romania, Ana Pauker, eliminated her husband.’ [391]

‘By the way,’ smiled General-Professor Kuroshchupov, ‘you can often observe this power complex among your acquaintances. Just look where the wife rules over the husband, where matriarchy reigns. But do be careful: keep your eyes and ears open, and your mouth shut. Otherwise, you’ll fall out with many of your acquaintances. And then you’ll understand why this thing is called “my name is legion” and why these are called accursed questions.’

The house of sinister benevolence, where Marshal of State Security of the USSR Maksim Rudnev resided under the golden cockerel, was full of all sorts of riddles. The next time the agitprop instructor went hunting for accursed questions, he stumbled upon the riddle of the Aztecs. In Maksim’s library, next to *The Daughter of Montezuma*, which Boris had read in childhood, stood more serious books on the subject.

When in the sixteenth century the Spanish conquistadors began colonising the new American continent, alongside outright savages in Central America, they encountered the Aztec and Maya tribes, who possessed an astonishingly advanced civilisation: a strictly organised class society, palaces and temples of superb architecture, theatres, their own writing system, and even books.

Alongside this flourishing culture, there also thrived a peculiar pagan cult marked by incredible cruelty. It seemed that all the religious rites of the Aztecs and Maya had been born in the brain of a madman obsessed with bloodlust. There was everything - from human sacrifice to ritual cannibalism.

The Maya priests called themselves sons of the sun. But they chose their attendants from among ordinary mortals, which was considered a great honour. However, the fortunate elect feared this honour nearly as much as the sacrificial knife. The solemn rite of induction into the office of attendant involved barbaric operations that transformed a man into a woman. These unfortunate attendants were called *mujerado* by the Spaniards, from the Spanish root *mujer*, meaning woman. The remarkable civilisation of the Maya came at quite a cost to the poor *mujerado*. [249, 257, 286, 303, 634, 651]

Some later researchers believed that this mysterious civilisation may have been brought to the American continent from the legendary Atlantis. They recalled obscure legends that, in the final era of its existence, Atlantis had been afflicted with some terrible vices which provoked the wrath of the gods and led to its destruction. Could the Maya priests be descendants of the Atlanteans?

This question might have been answered by the inhabitants of the Canary Islands, which geographically are the likeliest remnants of sunken Atlantis. These islands were once populated by the Guanches. But the Guanches died out to the last person from a mysterious, unknown illness which the Spaniards called modorra - an overwhelming melancholy ending in suicide. This illness still afflicts those inhabitants of the Canary Islands who retain Guanche blood in their veins. [250, 287, 635]

In the margins of one book, Maksim had noted in his own hand that this mysterious modorra afflicted not only the relatives of the Maya priests, but also the relatives of the priests of communism - Karl Marx, Trotsky, and Stalin - all of whose families were riddled with suicides.

To uncover the secret of the Maya, the simplest approach would be to read the books of the Maya. But here again lay a riddle: the majority of Maya books were found to have been burned. And under rather strange circumstances. This was not the vandalism of drunken soldiers or an ignorant inquisitor. Quite the opposite - it was done by Bishop Diego de Landa, a missionary and educator of the Indians, whom his contemporaries regarded as a saint, and the only man who had actually read those books. [285, 633]

The key to the Maya script, de Landa received from the priests. But when he began reading their chronicles, his soul was filled with such horror and revulsion that he ordered all the books to be gathered and burned. More than that, knowing the Indians' custom of burying books with the dead, he ordered all graves where they might have been stored to be excavated, and any books found were also consigned to the flames. Until his death, de Landa was tormented by the desire to say something about the mysterious religion of the Maya, but each time he cut himself short with the words: 'The devil himself is hidden in it!'

The Maya and the Aztecs perished along with their culture and civilisation. On the grass-covered ruins of their palaces and temples remained only glyphs weathered by time. But the stones were silent. Scholars deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs, Phoenician cuneiform - there is not a single secret code in the world that has not been cracked sooner or later. Only one form of writing remained that stubbornly guarded its secret - the script of the Maya. Hundreds of linguists tried to solve the mystery of those enigmatic signs, but in vain.

For the first time since Bishop de Landa, and even without the help of the sons of the sun, these glyphs were deciphered by a young Moscow scholar, Yuri Norozov. He submitted his decipherment of the Maya hieroglyphs as a thesis for the degree of Candidate of Science. Instead, as a rare exception, he was immediately awarded the diploma of Doctor of Historical Sciences - and by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR itself. Just like the time when Doctor of Sociology Maksim Rudnev discovered the devil's formula and harnessed that devil to serve Soviet power. [288, 636]

Naturally, Norozov's discovery did not escape the attention of Professor Rudnev's think tank, and Boris often encountered Doctor Norozov in the house under the golden cockerel. He was

a thin man with black, dishevelled hair and a gaze like a sullen raven. Despite his youth, the historian was so uncommunicative that he seemed to regard conversation with contemporaries as nothing but a regrettable waste of time. And when it came to the secrets of the Maya, he kept silent almost as obstinately as Bishop de Landa.

Leafing through books on Aztec culture, Boris read how, on feast days, mass human sacrifices were carried out upon stone altars adorned with intricate glyphs. One of the largest festivals was the festival of fertility. On this day, up to 20,000 people were sometimes sacrificed beneath the obsidian knives of the priests. The sons of the sun would cut the heart from the unfortunate victim and raise it aloft as an offering to the sun.

At that moment, Maksim entered the room with his right hand - the humble Archbishop Pitirim. But this time, the archbishop was not in the uniform of an MVD general, but in the black cassock of a priest, with a heavy cross on his chest. With them came Lieutenant General Malinin, also a professor of some dark MVD field, who often said that only his surname was sweet, while his work was rather bitter. [291, 639]

‘I’ve just been looking into your colleagues, the Aztec priests,’ said Boris, addressing the archbishop. ‘What were they doing, amusing themselves with mass killings on fertility festivals?’

‘Seems that’s just how things are done in America,’ boomed the general-archbishop, stroking his full beard. ‘Much the same thing happens today on American television - nothing but murder. If a normal person watches it, he feels sick.’

‘Exactly like in the Roman Colosseum,’ added Professor of Dark Affairs Malinin. ‘In the period of the Roman Empire’s collapse. Then degenerates are replaced by barbarians. In America, that’ll be the negroes.’

The book went on to describe how the sons of the sun chose the most beautiful and youthful virgin and cast her into the sacrificial fire. Or drowned her in some kind of special well. Boris read this and muttered:

‘What idiots... burning virgins...’

‘Let the priests do their job,’ advised the professor of dark affairs affably. ‘I fear you’d get more trouble than pleasure from such a beauty.’

‘By the way, the Aztecs had gods for every occasion,’ noted Archbishop Pitirim. ‘But there was one god they didn’t have - the god of love.’

Boris recalled the dazzling beauties who sometimes appeared in the house under the golden cockerel. And how Maksim had warned him that these beauties were not ordinary but special - and that Boris must not get involved with them, as they would bring nothing but misfortune. Could they be the same kind of beauties the Aztec priests used to burn and drown? And in the house of sinister benevolence, had they been turned into the houris of the 13th Department, deployed by the MVD to foreign diplomats and journalists? The 13th Department even maintained a special list of “Russian wives”, drawn from these можно-герлс, with whom many foreign sniffers, listeners, and scribblers had been rewarded. [640]

Meanwhile, the head of the 13th Department sat in his chair and did not join the conversation. Following the philosophical advice of Schopenhauer, who loved dogs more than people, Maksim preferred to play with his German shepherd, Rolf. Outside the wide window, framed by stained glass with dark saintly faces, the autumn wind whistled despondently.

'Pitirim Fyodorovich, what is all this really about?' asked Boris. 'Just briefly - in a word.'

'That's the point - it cannot be put in a word,' replied the general-archbishop. 'It is the sorrowful history of all world culture and civilisation.'

To raise his cultural level, the agitprop instructor again delved into books about mediaeval witches and warlocks, who followed in the wake of the Aztec priests. In these books, Jesuit scholars asserted that God is, above all, love. Therefore, when witches and warlocks sign a pact with the devil, they pay for it with the highest gift that God can give to man - the gift of love - and thus they are incapable of loving anyone. Except themselves. That is why they become egoists, egocentrics, and egomaniacs.

In the margin, Maksim had noted in his own hand: 'A very good observation. I've seen this very often myself.'

Having been castrated of love for their neighbour, the devil often substitutes this with love of poetry, literature, ballet, and the stage, making it easier to charm others. That is why such shape-shifters often become excellent actors - or equally good spies, like Mata Hari. [252]

Drawing practical conclusions from this, the 13th Department assumed in advance that the majority of American journalists in Moscow were agents of the American intelligence service, the CIA. Especially if they gave off the scent of the Antichrist. With equal rigour, the 13th Department sniffed out the wives of these journalists. According to Berdyaev's philosophy concerning the union of Satan and the Antichrist, it turned out they not only existed but even married.

Further on in the handbook on demonology it stated that a pact with the devil could be for several years or for life, and it was signed in blood: 'Sometimes, in the case of the young, the pact is concluded for a short period, but it is always renewed thereafter.'

Next to this, Maksim had scribbled a marginal note: 'One form of such a blood-signed pact is mixed marriages. But that blood is putrid. And putrid blood, like poison, is stronger than healthy blood.'

Treading the path of culture and civilisation, the agitprop instructor stumbled upon a profound treatise by the extremely erudite Franciscan monk Ludovico Sinistrari, *De Daemonialitate*, which reported that after the pact was signed, the unclean spirit would attempt to stamp his mark on the body of the tempted neophyte, 'especially upon those from whom he expects constancy.' [254, 295, 643]

This was unanimously confirmed by all the mediaeval authorities in the field of demonology. According to their descriptions, the 'devil's mark' or 'witch's mark' was something like a black birthmark of various shapes and shades. Sometimes the flesh at that spot became sunken, as if hollow. Unlike an ordinary birthmark, the 'devil's mark' differed in that if it were pricked, no pain was felt and no fluids emerged.

Thus, in the time of the Holy Inquisition, people suspected of witchcraft were typically subjected to a thorough medical examination. In the presence of a commission of learned physicians, apothecaries, and barbers, the suspects were stripped naked, all body hair shaved off, and the 'devil's mark' was sought, often hidden in the most concealed places. If such a mark was found, it would be pierced with special silver pins.

The victims of such examinations had their eyes blindfolded beforehand so they could not see when and where they were being pricked. Witch-hunters claimed that if the mark was genuine, then even when the pin was inserted to a depth of three fingers, witches felt absolutely no pain and could not tell when or where they had been pricked. Moreover, the spot would show no blood or other secretions.

The agitprop instructor turned for clarification to the Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, General Kuroshchupov, who, having done his fair share of groping hens, was resting at the house under the golden cockerel.

'It's a kind of natural local anaesthesia,' replied the general-professor of the 13th Department with calm detachment. 'A loss of sensitivity resulting from disrupted conduction in sensory nerves from the periphery to the brain. One of the symptoms found in certain diseases of the peripheral and central nervous systems. Sometimes occurs in all sorts of psychopaths and madmen. Have you heard of Kamo?'

General Kuroshchupov then recounted a rather curious story. Kamo, or more precisely, Semyon Arshakovich Ter-Petrosyan, was a legendary revolutionary hero. Together with Stalin, he led the infamous Tiflis bank robbery, and the stolen funds were used to support Lenin. Because of this, he was arrested in Germany in 1908. For four years, Kamo sat in prisons - feigning insanity. German psychiatrists knew that some madmen were insensitive to pain. To test Kamo, they, like mediaeval doctors, drove needles under his fingernails in the twentieth century. But the bandit-revolutionary merely smiled and fed breadcrumbs to the sparrows flying through his cell window. He later tried to kill himself and starved himself deliberately. Eventually, he was transferred to a mental hospital, from which he quickly escaped. [297, 645]

'The point is,' concluded the general-professor, 'that Kamo was not insane but half-insane - just as mentally ill as most revolutionaries. That is why Kamo felt no pain - he had precisely this anaesthesia. After the revolution, life bored him, and in 1923 he deliberately rode his bicycle into a lorry and was killed. Incidentally, this Kamo was cross-eyed. Hence the saying: the evil eye.'

'And what does all this have to do with the Committee for Religious Affairs?'

'Very simple. Kamo, just like Stalin, started out in a religious school. God and the devil are two sides of the same coin. That's why we monitor this. Give them freedom, like in America, and half the pastors will pray to God, and the other half to the devil. And then you'll have, as in America, two rival churches.' General-Professor Kuroshchupov twiddled his fingers. 'We're the ones who feel up these hens. We're catching sinners.'

Next in Maksim's black-magic library came a weighty work by one Frederick Elworthy entitled The Evil Eye. Digging through the millennia, Professor Elworthy had systematised

the origins of the superstition about the evil eye, which supposedly brings curses and various misfortunes. [256, 296, 644]

As it turned out, the matter was as simple as a pickled cucumber. Such authorities of classical antiquity as Herodotus, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Plutarch had long observed that this superstition was linked to certain deformities of the human eye, especially strabismus. Later, the science was expanded to include not only the cross-eyed but also the lame, the hunchbacked, dwarfs, fat people, and, in general, all freaks. But only those deformed from birth. Eventually, the category expanded to include not only the hideous but also the unusually beautiful - in the latter case, especially women.

Professor Kuroshchupov immediately linked theory to practice:

‘There you are - I just told you Kamo was cross-eyed. And there are plenty of such examples. The eyes are the mirror of the soul. Dostoevsky had heterochromia - different coloured eyes - and that too is reflected in his life and work: from revolutionary to reactionary.’

‘You don’t mean to say you actually use such silly superstitions in your work?’

‘A little bit, a little bit,’ replied Ilya Sergeyevich with a hint of offence in his voice. ‘In Peter the Great’s time, there was even a special imperial decree: the cross-eyed and red-haired were forbidden to testify in court - since God marks the rogue.’

‘So you keep tabs on redheads too?’

‘Of course we do. Well, think about it. Lenin was red-haired. His wife, Krupskaya - red-haired. Lenin’s main goddess, Inessa Armand - red-haired too. And the chief traitor in Lenin’s circle, Malinovsky, was also red-haired - and an agent of the Okhrana. If you count it up, there were so many redheads among the Bolshevik leaders that you could’ve called the Bolsheviks the party of redheads. Take Bukharin - redhead! Or Yenukidze - redhead too! And Stalin’s mother - red-haired. Pah!’ And, to calm himself, General Kuroshchupov felt for the pistol at his belt. [298, 646]

Gently stroking his pistol, the Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs added briskly:

‘Of course, all these anomalies can occur in normal people as well. It’s just that among the legionaries, they happen more often than among others. The devil, you see, is a terrible muddler.’

Cat Vasya sat on Maksim’s lap, pawing at the medal ‘For the Rescue of Drowning Persons’. Meanwhile, Maksim and Archbishop Pitirim were engaging in a bout of sophistry. Citing the philosopher Denis de Rougemont, they debated the devil’s role in France’s defeat by Hitler. Although Hitler was a mixture of Satan and the Antichrist, the true headquarters of Satan, it turned out, was in Paris. Since the devil is, above all, spirit, then all the monstrosities of modern spiritual culture - symbolism in poetry, modernism in painting, existentialism in literature - had originated nowhere but in France. And since all these deformities and grimaces represented nothing other than spiritual anarchism and nihilism, that is, the very Nothing which annihilates, the results are plain to see. After the war, the devil, having

completed his task and being fond of gold and comfort, relocated his headquarters to America. [259, 300, 648]

Meanwhile, the agitprop instructor was poring over the profound work of Pope Benedict XIV, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione*, which discussed the question of whether devils could have offspring. It turned out that, with some skill, devils could indeed produce little devils. But to do so they used a cunning technique unknown even to the Pope himself.

Alongside was a scholarly work by the Ambrosian monk Francesco Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, written in 1608. Citing numerous scholarly authorities of his time, Brother Francesco concluded that 'in all probability, the devils were the first inventors of artificial insemination, since they are able to transport human seed over great distances and in such a way that it retains its properties. By some method, unknown or inexplicable, they are able to inject it so that pregnancy results. Furthermore, it is guaranteed that the offspring will inherit all the qualities of the devils.' [260]

Strange only that this mediaeval nonsense by Brother Francesco is cited by such a modern authority as Henry Rode, a police expert in forensic chemistry and scientific criminal investigation, in his book on sociology and criminology *The Satanic Mass*, which was published in London quite recently.

To support Brother Francesco, the Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR came forward.

'It's very simple,' said General-Professor Kuroshchupov. 'Have you heard of the Buchenwald commandant's wife, Ilse Koch? She was tried at Nuremberg as a war criminal and sentenced to hang. But she laughed and boldly declared that she was pregnant, and the law prohibits executing pregnant women. Of course, no one believed her - after all, she'd spent over a year in solitary confinement. The isolation was such that not even a fly could get in. Then they checked and saw - yes, indeed, she was pregnant! So they had to pardon her.' [301, 649]

'But how did she get pregnant in solitary?'

'The Allies launched a special investigation but uncovered nothing.'

'And you know the answer?'

'Of course,' smiled General Kuroshchupov, gently fingering his pistol. 'We know everything. Only the Lord God Himself knows more than we do.'

And indeed! Although even Pope Benedict XIV admitted he did not know how devils managed to produce little devils, the red cardinal Maksim Rudnev had got to the bottom of it. Where Brother Francesco had racked his brains over the mystery of artificial insemination as practised by devils, Maksim had written in the margin: 'Made by finger. See file "Blue Star" - appendix no. 27/C. A good example of the formula of power.'

Rummaging through the shelves, Boris found the old file on the "Blue Star" case. Appendix no. 27/C concerned Fedka the Cross-Eyed. And it began with the verification of his family tree, which was rather tangled. [653, 658]

Here I, a Soviet slave of God, who writes this sorrowful chronicle of Russia's time of troubles - may my name be forgotten - must apologise for the sinful lines that follow. But how else is one to describe these devilish mysteries?

Besides, today in free America they write all this quite openly and call it progressive modernist literature. And we Russians are reproached for having fallen behind the times. Well then, let me give you - from the point of view of dialectical Christianity - an example of such socialist modernism.

The case of Fedka the Cross-Eyed began long ago - even before the 1905 revolution. And everything started in reverse - not with the father, but with the mother. Fedka the Cross-Eyed's mother, Mara Schwarz-Chernykh, was a revolutionary in public life, a lesbian in private life, and a witch in her soul. All this demanded secrecy, and thus produced an inner harmony. Having tasted the sins of youth, the witch Mara decided that remaining an old maid was unprofitable, and it was better to get married. But how was she to do this if she loved women, not men? [308, 656]

But for witches this is very simple. One need only know how two lesbians make love: they lick each other - and lap it up. That's why they're called pagans. And to marry, the witch must find herself a suitable male shape-shifter who does the same thing - that is, a minetteur from the French anecdotes. And there are legions of them. Even if it's ersatz coffee... [515]

That is exactly what the witch Mara did. She found herself a slender man with a breaking voice and, if one looked closely, slightly effeminate features, who even passed himself off as Prince Oblonsky and who had served as a *mujerado* for one of the priests of a secret cult surrounding the philosopher-mystic Berdyaev. The same one who preached the union of Satan and the Antichrist and thus the kingdom of the prince of this world. [302, 650]

Poor mujerado Oblonsky was in a difficult position himself - he simply couldn't marry, as he loved not women, but men. So witch Mara, without much difficulty, arranged the match, and they were wed. And they made love according to Comrade Freud's theory of oral erotism - only slightly reversed. If before the husband sucked, now he licked. And the wife, if before she licked, now she sucked. As in a piquant French anecdote. Of course, in parallel they continued with their old sins.

And people looked on from the outside and said: 'Ah, what a lovely couple.'

Later, witch Mara wanted children. But to avoid bad heredity, to reduce by fifty percent the chances of the devil's degeneration, she decided to conceive by artificial insemination. She simply sent her lesbian girlfriend to the prostitutes to buy a used condom. Then witch Mara conceived a child for herself with her finger. Thus she bore a finger-made son, fruit of sin, who later became a futurist poet hiding under the pseudonyms Ivan Strannik and Mort, which in Latin means death. After him, by the same modernist method, appeared a second son, who later became the famous bandit known as Fedka the Cross-Eyed. [261]

Leafing through the "Blue Star" file, the agitprop instructor could not help but think: 'Indeed, Brother Francesco was right when he said that with such artificial insemination it is guaranteed that all the devilish qualities will be transmitted to the offspring!' Even the Soviet Thomas the Doubter wavered in his unbelief.

The Schwarz-Chernykh family was an old demonic brood, swarming with all sorts of devils and imps. There were gloomy devils of schizophrenia and paranoia, merry devils of anarchy and nihilism, the two-faced devils incubus and succubus who turn men into women and women into men, hidden devils of sadism and masochism, devils of murder and suicide, and still a whole multitude of various devils and imps.

For many generations in that demonic family, children were made by finger. Even witch Mara herself, looking in the mirror, had no doubt that she too was finger-made. In spite of it all, the devils of megalomania and persecution mania whispered to them that they were not ordinary but special, that they were chosen, that they were the elite, and that they had a special mission.

After the 1917 revolution, in secret the Soviet government issued in 1922 a secret decree banning secret societies such as the “Blue Star”. The Bolshevik Cheka quickly discovered that most leaders of rival revolutionary parties - Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, and so forth - were closely connected with such esoteric secret societies. It was a sort of party of parties and union of unions. Therefore, to put a stop to anarchy, part of those leaders were simply shot in the Cheka, while another part were expelled abroad.

It was said that they were deliberately exiled in order to sow discord and anarchy among the émigrés. Among these miscarriages of the revolution there were many seekers after God, like Berdyaev. And indeed, the very first thing these God-seekers did was to split the Orthodox Church abroad into two churches. One, genuine, ascetic, still prayed to the Lord God. The other, false, schismatic, modernist, prayed to the God-seeker Berdyaev, who stealthily preached the union of Satan and the Antichrist. These were the black hens that General Kuroshchupov was feeling up. The brethren in Satan and in the Antichrist went to confession and carried all their secrets to Soviet intelligence. The general’s hens laid golden eggs.

In the same way witch Mara and her shape-shifting husband were expelled abroad. There they quickly sniffed out their own kind and, again posing as humanists and liberals, wrote saccharine memoirs of the Russian Revolution. For a living they worked as consultants in dirty affairs for various intelligence services. And in passing, when needed, they were also milked by Soviet intelligence.

The finger-made children of witch Mara, Ivan Strannik and Fedka the Cross-Eyed, remained in Russia and carefully concealed their social origins. But the witch-friend who once ran to fetch the condoms from which both of them had hatched, during the Great Purge landed in the 13th Department and confessed everything.

Next in the “Blue Star” file came the investigation materials about Fedka the Cross-Eyed himself, who was the king of Moscow’s bandits and who, like Bluebeard, had five wives. And here were Fedka the Cross-Eyed’s own testimonies in his own hand, where he wrote the following: ‘I was ruined by my lousy wives. Four lousy whores ran away from me because, they said, I supposedly attacked them in bed with a loaded Nagant, staging either a rape or a robbery. And without this staging, they claimed, I was a totalitarian impotent and could do nothing. And the fifth lousy whore got so sick of this totalitarian love that the bitch snitched on me to Criminal Investigation.

‘These cheap whores simply did not understand my complex soul. For me, the Nagant is the only holy water that quenches my damned and insatiable thirst for command, thirst for power,

and sexual drive. Speaking of my wives, nothing could give me the necessary relief for my soul and body that I sought, as did their absolute submission to my need to rule, when they writhed before me in terror. But these whores did not understand me, though I dressed them up like little dolls.

'It is very difficult to explain those strange sweet sensations that pierced my whole body to the marrow when I pointed the Nagant at my victim, watching her tremble and sweat from fear. At that moment I felt like God. In my hands were all truth and falsehood. As if I were gazing into a well where all the world's secrets are hidden and was learning absolute truth. Sometimes, during a robbery, I even forgot about the money and walked away.'

In the margin, Maksim had written a note in his own hand: 'Here it is - the formula of power!'

Further on Fedka the Cross-Eyed wrote: 'All my life was filled with envy and hatred of the achievements of others. I often thought that I could have been a great leader, capable of astonishing the whole world with social upheavals as incredible and fantastic as those that occurred to great rulers alone. But my misfortune is that I was born too late and missed the revolution. Otherwise, I would have shown you all where the crayfish hibernate.' [263]

Boris remembered how, once in childhood, after fights with the hooligan Fedka the Cross-Eyed, little Maksim had prayed to God, asking to be made big and strong. And now Marshal of State Security of the USSR Maksim Rudnev, having become big and strong, was writing in the bandit Fedka the Cross-Eyed's case file a joyless conclusion: 'So this is the price of that power which the prince of this world bestows!'

Yet Fedka the Cross-Eyed was not downcast and ended his confession thus: 'Though I am a social louse and nit fit to be crushed, I beg the Soviet power not to shoot me. As Comrade Lenin prophetically said, even under Soviet power there is no getting by without cesspit cleaners. Therefore I can still be useful, to crush other lice and nits. So that, as it were, you don't have to dirty your own hands. Send me to a corrective labour camp, and I promise to mend my ways.'

And the king of Moscow's bandits kept his promise. He was sent to a concentration camp, where, after the Great Purge, former heroes of the revolution were imprisoned. There Fedka the Cross-Eyed became foreman of a brigade of bricklayers and zealously re-educated the former revolutionaries with his cudgel.

'What's this, you troublemakers, you rebelled against Tsar and God?' roared Fedka the Cross-Eyed, laying about his bricklayers with his cudgel. 'And now I am for you both Tsar and God. As you fought for, so you've ended up with!'

That night Boris stayed overnight in the house under the golden cockerel. But he slept badly. All night long the agitprop instructor was pursued, as if in a film, by obsessive dreams.

From somewhere in the distance, the beautiful Olga smiled mysteriously, half-angel and half-Martian, wrapping herself shiveringly in her white shawl. Beside her stood, in military uniform, semi-princess and NKVD general Zinaida Genrikhovna, a cross between Satan and the Antichrist. Following them, like a lame devil, hobbled the semi-hero of Perekop in red breeches. Somewhere behind, the mystical "Blue Star" shimmered softly, where, like in a

nest of snakes, good evil and evil good writhed together. And in the corner sat Maksim, like Doctor Faust, poring over his books on demonology, searching for the formulas of good and evil, reason and madness, life and death. Then he pointed at Boris and sneered: ‘And this is my Thomas the Doubter!’ [313]

Thomas the Doubter turned over in his sleep onto the other side. But from the other side lined up Professor Rudnev’s brain trust. General-Archbishop Pitirim, with a cross on his chest and a huge pistol at his belt. General-Professor Kuroshchupov with his hens that laid golden eggs. The 13th Department’s court physician, Doctor Bykov, with his little snakes twined around a chalice of poison. General-Inquisitor Toptygin with his little hatchets on his epaulettes. Professor of Dark Affairs Malinin, whose surname was sweet but whose work was bitter. These brain-men gently stroked their little pistols and winked: ‘Hm-hm, we are the secret police of the new Russia, the young Russia! And we know all and everything. Only the Lord God Himself knows more than we do!’ [199]

Thomas the Doubter tossed and turned from side to side, but it did not help. All around, like mermaids in a fairy tale, sat Maksim’s crafty Jews - the apostles of the 13th Department. The apostle of scientific criminology, Professor Lombroso, with his mad geniuses. The apostle of degenerology, Doctor Nordau, with his degenerate geniuses. The apostle of existentialism, the hunchback philosopher Kierkegaard, with his demons that dwell in printer’s ink. There too was the apostle of psychoanalysis, Freud, inventor of oral erotism, calmly sucking his cigar, which according to his own teaching was a phallic symbol. And the other crafties gazed into Freud’s mouth - and licked their lips.

And presiding over it all, like a scholarly cat under an oak tree, sat Marshal of State Security of the USSR Maksim Rudnev, playing with his enchanted beauties. And on Maksim’s lap sat cat Vasya, playing with the medal ‘For the Rescue of Drowning Persons’.

In the morning, leaving the house of sinister benevolence, the agitprop instructor glanced askance at the golden cockerel on the roof and said: ‘Well then, I’ve had enough...’

In the case of especially important prisoners, so that they could not commit suicide prematurely, their belt, braces, shoelaces, dentures, spectacles, and even the buttons on their trousers were taken away. In the sanitary reception they were shorn with clippers, put under the shower, dusted with delousing powder, and locked in a cell with rubber walls on one of the underground levels of the Main Directorate of the MVD.

In the underground cell the electric light burned constantly, and there was no difference between night and day. Therefore, when the Marshal of State Security of the USSR, who had himself once organised this system, found himself in this cell as a prisoner, even he no longer knew exactly how much time he had spent there.

At first he was taken before medical commissions, where his physical health was checked so thoroughly it was as if he were being prepared for a flight to the moon. Then he was forced to undergo a series of psychological tests. So complex and confusing that an ordinary man would certainly have got lost in them.

But the former marshal knew what the doctors were looking for. And he knew how to deceive them. The doctors knew that too, and begged him to be honest in the name of science, since, one way or another, he had nothing left to lose. And the prisoner also knew he had nothing more to lose. Judging by these extraordinary concerns for his health, he knew what awaited him.

And he already knew when it would come. Not before he finished writing his autobiography. Not just a questionnaire, as in the case of ordinary mortals, but an unlimited piece of writing, since from now on his life no longer belonged to him but to history. Those who sat above knew that under such conditions this biography would be very detailed and long.

When even this bureaucratic procedure was completed, the prisoner was summoned to the final interrogation, where the sentence was usually announced. Shuffling along the underground corridor, holding up his trousers without buttons, the former marshal could not resist asking the escorts:

'What is today's date?'

But the escorts only frowned and remained silent. The prisoner remembered with annoyance that on this underground floor all the escorts were deaf-mute. His shoeless boots flapped from his feet, and he dragged them along the floor. They lifted him by lift to the very top floor and led him into the office he knew so well from earlier times. Behind the big desk sat a man in the familiar uniform of Marshal of State Security of the USSR.

The two marshals, the former and the current, silently looked at one another.

'Sit down,' said one.

'Thank you for the courtesy,' said the other, carefully sitting in the familiar chair.

'Would you like a cigarette?'

The prisoner reached for a papirosa.

'Here are matches. Would you like a glass of cognac?'

'Yes, I won't refuse.'

'Do you have any procedural complaints?'

'No. I even want to thank you for not dragging me to interrogation naked, as was once your practice.'

'Well then, only the formalities remain. Read this.'

The former marshal took the typewritten sheet of paper with the State Emblem of the USSR and squinted: 'The Special Collegium of the Supreme Court of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in an extraordinary session...'

'What a farce!' snorted the prisoner. 'After all, there was no session at all!'

‘...having considered the case of the former Minister of Internal Affairs and former member of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee, Beria L. P....’ [667]

Deprived of his spectacles, his near-sighted eyes hurried anxiously along the lines, searching for the final words:

‘...has sentenced the accused to the supreme measure of punishment - execution by shooting. The sentence is final and not subject to appeal. The sentence is to be carried out immediately.’ [265]

‘I can hardly see without my glasses,’ mumbled the condemned man through the toothless mouth from which his dentures had been taken. ‘What is the date here?’

‘Do not pay attention to the date. According to the newspapers, you were shot six months ago already.’
‘The usual tricks of Professor Rudnev,’ crookedly smirked the living corpse and looked at the signatures below. ‘And where is your signature?’
‘In this case I am only an intermediate instance.’
‘Yes, you always preferred to remain in the shadows.’ The condemned man tossed the sentence onto the desk. ‘Or after you liquidated Stalin himself, you are no longer interested in such trifles as ministers of one sort or another?’
‘Lavrentiy Palych, do you remember when Stalin was preparing the second purge? And how you were first on the list?’
‘Of course, and then you saved my life. And I - in jest - even awarded you the medal “For the Rescue of Drowning Persons”. Which you seem to like very much... Ah, if only I had not got caught up in that damned struggle for succession...’
‘That is why they say pride is the first mortal sin. And as a result you were again first on the list. But this time...’
‘I understand, this time the rescue of the drowning is the work of the drowning themselves. In your eyes I am an incurable victim of my own passions and of the historical process. That is why you shot me in the newspapers six months ago already. Then you, without hurry, drained from me everything necessary for your special archives. Then you will cut from my corpse all the little organs that interest you and pickle them in jars for your collection. Out of fear of damaging my precious organs you will not even shoot me. I know - you will suffocate me with gas.’ [320, 668]

Some opponents of the death penalty argue that for the condemned it is not the execution itself that is so terrible as its expectation. Therefore, they say, a murderer awaiting execution suffers more than the victim, who did not expect it. And this, they say, is unjust. To correct this injustice, in the 13th Department of the MVD certain categories of those sentenced to death were not told of their sentence. They were simply transferred to a special cell and a sleeping draught was mixed into their food. When they fell asleep, poisonous gas was released into the hermetically sealed cell.

‘It is well when one does not know this,’ said the condemned man. ‘But I know it perfectly well.’ Marshal Rudnev silently slid the bottle of cognac towards the minister. He poured himself, but now not into a liqueur glass, but into a water glass, and drank it like water. Then he smirked slyly: ‘Of course you are hoping that at parting I will tell you something interesting. Hand over to you, so to speak, all my secrets. The whole trouble is that in theory you know everything. But you do not know it in practice. You do not know what deadly love

of death is, for which one pays with deadly fear of death. When all life long one lives by love of another's fear, of another's death. And for this one all life long torments oneself with fear of one's own death. When, in dreams and in waking, you begin to be pursued by every vile and filthy thing. And when you know what that is - progressive brain liquefaction.' [267]

'And what about the power complex?'
'Very simple.' The former Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR rubbed his forehead. 'As a child I loved to run barefoot. Especially after rain. And I loved to crush frogs under my bare feet. It pleased me to watch their guts crawl out through their mouths - such white bladders - and to touch them with my hands. As others feel silk or velvet.'
'In your autobiography you wrote that when you grew up, you felt the same need to crush people?'
'Yes, to feel that they fear you, to command people, to be on top. But for this it was necessary to have over people the same power that I once had over frogs. That is why I fought for power, no matter what kind - Soviet, Cadet, or Turkish - any kind, power, power and power! For you yourself know that all true revolutionaries are like that. But you only do not know with what deepest pleasure I shot them all, knowing they were the same black toads as I myself.'

'That is the fundamental law of Marxism - unity and struggle of opposites,' said Marshal Rudnev with lazy indifference. 'Well, and what about the problem of minors?'
The former Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR shrugged his shoulders like an old man: 'That is the price which Comrade Satan takes for power, for glory and greatness. Power - in exchange for impotence. Sexual impotence. Impotence.'
'By the way, was not one of your wives of royal blood?'
'Oh yes, something like an heiress to the Georgian throne. You will say that this is another proof of my megalomania. To climb not just anywhere, but onto a queen... But my regal wifelet was not at all bothered by my impotence. On the contrary, it suited her perfectly well.'
'Birds of a feather flock together?'
'Yes. For among women there are as many impotents as among men. Only in women it is not called impotence but frigidity. And then, to mask themselves, these frigid impotent women marry impotent men. And afterwards each performs his conjuring tricks in his own way. As they say, sixty-nine ways of being unhappy.'
'All right, but what about minors after all?'
'Why, just so... You seem to have attained the highest power, and yet you cannot take anything. You are the supreme guardian of the law, and yet you are irresistibly drawn to that which the law most strictly forbids - to minors... Ha, but most people do not even suspect what we do with these children... As your Comrade Freud says - we have oral erotism... And in Russian it comes out as unprintable obscenities... Comrade Satan knows how to hide his little secrets so that they are even shameful to utter...'

Not long ago the Minister of the MVD was lord over the life and death of millions. Now he was a pitiful and helpless old man. When he grew agitated, saliva dribbled from his toothless mouth and dripped on his shirt. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve and summed up: 'Morbid thirst for power, that is the power complex, is usually linked with sadism... And sadism is usually linked with homosexuality - open, latent, or suppressed - from which arise all these sixty-nine ways of being unhappy... And in parallel there comes brain liquefaction... And the combinations here are more than in a kaleidoscope... There you have the whole formula of power. Is this not the devil's mockery? But such were all the great rulers -

Alexander the Great, Caesar, Napoleon, Lenin, Hitler, and even Comrade Stalin. And there is nothing you can do about it, my dear fellow. In any case, you yourself know it perfectly well. You simply pressed a little button and are recording all my words onto tape. For accuracy. For precision. So the revolutionaries are replaced by bureaucrats.' [268]

The face of the old man, covered in grey stubble, grew gaunt, his toothless mouth collapsed inward, his chin lifted up to his nose like an old woman's. He sat hunched in the chair, greedily puffing at his papirosa as if trying to smoke enough in reserve. His trembling fingers would not obey him, and the ash scattered down onto his knees.

'In your place, Marshal Rudnev, I would be very proud of this historic moment,' said the old man with the face of an old woman. 'The Grand Inquisitor of the new Russia is sending to the other world the last great shaman of communism. But I see little enthusiasm on your face.'
'The birth of a new society,' said the marshal, 'is the same dirt and blood as the birth of a new man.'

The condemned man shifted in his chair and, rubbing his back, sighed:
'Ah, my sciatica has flared up again.'
He leaned on the central heating radiator. Though the radiator was cold, he remembered something and jerked back his hand as if he had been burnt.

Long ago the head of the 13th Department had told him how in the Middle Ages some church fathers ordered their bodies buried under the steps of churches, so that believers would tread to faith across their ashes. At the time this idea so appealed to the Minister of Internal Affairs that he ordered the cremation of the corpses of guilty or executed MVD officers in the furnace of the MVD's central heating system. To avoid airing dirty linen in public and settle family matters within the family.

Now the former minister imagined how his own corpse, cut up by the specialists of the 13th Department, would be wheeled on a trolley into the boiler room and given a domestic funeral. There his corpse would be thrown onto a tray of perforated iron and shoved beneath the oil jets of the central heating.

It even seemed to him that across Marshal Rudnev's face flickered an expression of light distaste, like that of a man looking at a corpse. To stretch out time, the living corpse reached for the bottle of cognac. Together with the alcohol, weariness and indifference spread through his body.

Suddenly he remembered the shore of the Black Sea, where as a boy he had run barefoot across the hot sand. Above his head the blazing Caucasian sun, and across his bare feet splashed the cold sea water. He looked at his sagging low shoes and naked heels and thought that soon those yellow heels would be caressed by the fire of the oil jets. How else to stretch out this damned time?

He looked at Marshal Rudnev. The latter sat with his eyelids half lowered, as though tired and wanting sleep. His sandy hair of indeterminate colour, not quite grey, not quite faded. His eyes with whitish lashes, neither grey nor greenish, like a lizard's. And on his gaunt face calm indifference.

‘Maksim Aleksanych,’ said the condemned man softly. ‘Stalin called you his red cardinal. But I look at you and think... You shot my predecessor Yezhov, then poisoned your patron Stalin, now you will send me up the flue of the central heating... After all, you sit and rule behind the Soviet throne no longer as a red cardinal but as a red pope... In Rome sits the pope of Rome, somewhere sits the antipope, and in Moscow sits the red pope... You have attained supreme power... Yet no one even knows your name... What pleasure do you get from that?’
‘None,’ said the red pope indifferently. ‘Only trouble.’ [323, 671]

‘Before you shot Yezhov, I interrogated him too. Incidentally, a completely sexless creature, lame-legged and even a dwarf in stature, a typical degenerate. Well, before his death he suddenly started babbling about God. “I,” he said, “broke all God’s commandments and deserve from God nothing but punishment. I served Stalin like a god and deserve from him nothing but gratitude. And now instead of gratitude they are shooting me. So what does it come to in the end? That means God does exist after all... Otherwise who is it that punishes me? And I know that me, like Yagoda, will be shot by this left-hander Rudnev - the left hand of the Lord God...”’

The condemned man glanced at the left hand of the Lord God, waiting for it to press the bell button to send him to the cellar. But it did not move.

The former minister drew deeply on his papirosa and shifted his gaze to the clock hand. He poured himself more cognac, chewed with his empty jaws, and greedily drank, to forget himself into stupor. Evening shadows crept from the corners of the room. Soon they would take him to the cellar and put him on the conveyor belt of death. Yes, from this house he would emerge only as a wisp of smoke from the central heating chimney.

‘Maksim Aleksanych, I have a little, last request,’ said the condemned man. ‘You know, in the good old days, when the likes of me were burnt at the stake...’

He recalled how then some of the condemned and sorcerers went to execution in a state of ecstasy, dancing and singing their heretical songs, as if rejoicing at the approach of death. Even at the stake they felt nothing and behaved as at a sabbath, when they danced around such same fires. Even in the underground dungeon their comrades had managed to pass them a secret potion that gave total oblivion. Sometimes a compassionate inquisitor, who knew the secret of this potion, would himself give it to them before execution to ease their death.

The former Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR nodded towards the large portrait of Lenin on the wall. That portrait swung aside on hinges, and behind it was a concealed wall cabinet. There was kept an extensive collection of various exotic poisons, once gathered by Genrikh Yagoda, who in his youth had been a pharmacist, later sat in that same office as head of the NKVD, and was then shot in connection with the trial of the Kremlin poisoner-doctors, where he had played the leading role.

‘Maksim Aleksanych, in there are also those narcotics,’ sighed the condemned man. ‘Since you are the left hand of the Lord God, give me a little...’
‘Why are you in such a hurry?’ said Marshal Rudnev, like a courteous host. ‘So, you were brought to power by all sorts of morbid complexes, which for simplicity’s sake we call the devil. And do you know how I got into this chair?’

The condemned man went on staring at the portrait of Lenin. ‘Once in childhood, when the neighbour boys beat me up, I turned to God with all sorts of foolish prayers and asked God to make me big and strong.’
‘Although that request was granted - but...’ The condemned man crookedly smiled. ‘It looks as though the devil overheard that request.’
‘Yet the fact is,’ the marshal leaned wearily back in his chair, ‘that in exchange for this I offered God to shorten my life a little... And here is the strange thing - now I have suddenly developed a heart defect. And the doctors are astonished that this defect is somewhat unusual.’
‘Ah, in your place I would not trust those Kremlin doctors.’
‘The doctors say I burned out my heart at work. It is like poisoning of the heart with autotoxins. Do you know what that poison is?’ [271, 326, 674]

‘No, if anyone poisoned you, it was not I. I prefer shooting. I had already practised that since childhood - shooting frogs with a catapult.’
‘Well then, this poison is somewhat philosophical. Evil thoughts and feelings promote the secretion in the body of certain autotoxins. In my case I hated too much the evil called the devil. And that hatred poisoned my heart. As you see, any hatred is poison, even hatred of evil.’
‘That is as may be,’ the condemned man said sceptically. ‘What harms one may benefit another. You are simply not suited to this work.’
‘The doctors say,’ the marshal continued, ‘that my strange heart defect may worsen or improve. That is, I may suffer an attack today or in thirty years. And this will depend on me myself, since the only medicine is to change my way of life.’
‘Perhaps you want now to resell your soul to the devil? In exchange for life?’ The condemned man again glanced at Lenin’s portrait. ‘Give me a good dose of narcotics from that little cabinet. And I, in the next world, will put in a word for you with comrade Satan.’
‘Now let us return from philosophy to your sentence,’ said the marshal.

Without raising his eyes, the condemned man awaited the moment when the left hand of the Lord God would press the bell button and summon the deaf-mute guards to lead him to the chamber of death. ‘In the newspapers you are already dead,’ he heard the distant voice. ‘And in the eyes of the people justice is restored. As for me, I need treatment. And I do not want to spoil my blood with one more drop of autotoxins. In short, your death sentence is commuted to a suspended one.’
The condemned man lifted his brows incredulously:
‘What new tricks are these from Professor Rudnev?’
‘It is simply that after Stalin’s death policy changes in principle. Now disgraced members of government will not be shot, as before, but sent to low-level work. Even as simple kolkhoz labourers.’

The former condemned suddenly burst into hysterical laughter:
‘Ha-ha-ha... The Grand Inquisitor has invented for us the most dreadful torture! For such men it is better to die than suffer such devilish mockery - to dig dung in a kolkhoz with one’s own hands! Ha-ha-ha...’

While he shook in a fit of hysterical laughter, the left hand of the Lord God drew from the desk a grey booklet:
‘So then, your death sentence is commuted to exile. Here is your new passport.’
The former Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR uncertainly opened the grey clothbound

cover. ‘We have given you another name, of course,’ said the marshal. ‘If you give your real name, no one will believe you. And if they do believe you, they will kill you like a dog. That, I trust, you yourself understand. Your official photographs were retouched so heavily that in reality no one will recognise you. We are now partly releasing the camps. By passport you are one of those released prisoners. For the organs of state security it is marked with a cipher that you served time for debauching minors. I think in your age recurrences are improbable. And remember that under Soviet law a suspended sentence means only a postponement of execution, but in principle the sentence itself remains in force. Remember this, citizen Berman.’
‘In other words, I shall be a living corpse,’ said the former First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Twisting his new passport in his hands, he cautiously looked at the door: ‘And where, then, is citizen Berman actually to go?’
‘Your place of residence is determined as your homeland - the Caucasus. You will be taken a hundred kilometres from Moscow. From there you will make your own way. You know how people released from camp get along. Show initiative. By the way, first sign these papers.’ [273, 327, 675]

In his time the former head of the secret police of the USSR had transferred in secret to secret accounts in Swiss banks foreign currency amounting to several million dollars. Now he carefully signed the documents transferring all this money into the foreign special fund of the 13th Department of the MVD. Then he sighed heavily:
‘Yes indeed, you have stripped me naked, so to speak. Now I have nothing left but to beg for alms: “Give a piece of bread to a poor old Jew... Suffered from the accursed Soviet power... Just released from the camp... Spare a kopeck for Christ’s sake!”’

The living corpse was gradually reviving, and his former talkativeness returned. ‘By the way, do not forget that Stalin also has money in Swiss banks, in secret numbered accounts. After all, I myself handled those transactions for him. They all do it - Trotsky, Nero, Stalin. And it would be unfair if you stripped me bare like this, and not Stalin. Pull some trick, of which you are such a lover. For example, let his daughter Svetlana flee abroad - and straight away slip into Switzerland, after the money, after the money. Then let Svetlana go to America and sell her memoirs there, which you will have planted with her in advance, describing all the degenerates in her family. And I shall be here begging: “Spare a kopeck for Christ’s sake!”’
‘When you reach the Black Sea, hire yourself as a worker on the vineyards,’ Marshal Rudnev advised. ‘When I was a student, in summer I worked there surveying phylloxera. That is a grape louse on the roots. And workers on digging up the roots are usually former prisoners. It was a good time: sun, air, and water - our best friends. Or hire yourself as a night watchman in a kolkhoz. You will rest. Cure your sciatica in the sunshine.’
‘Heartfelt thanks for the good advice,’ the living corpse smiled sourly and glanced at the medal ‘For Saving the Drowning’ that hung on Marshal Rudnev’s chest. ‘It seems I accidentally hit the mark when I awarded you that medal.’
‘Frankly, I even envy you a little,’ said the marshal, wearily and with a kind of indifference. ‘You will live as at a resort. While I must sit in this cage and occupy myself with all sorts of filthy business. Like a midwife at the birth of a new society. Sometimes I want simply to stand up and go away. To go just like you are going. You really are lucky.’
The living corpse looked into the impassive eyes of the marshal, eyes like those of a sleepy lizard, and shook his head:
‘Oh, I fear these are again some experiments of Professor Rudnev. Your jars of organs have bored you, so now you experiment on living men. For you know very well that for such as I, life without power is no life at all...’ [272, 328, 676]

He remembered that when such men were deprived of power they would fall ill with some mysterious disease and die. As though some worm were gnawing within them. Thus Napoleon, exiled to the island of Saint Helena, suddenly turned into a fat old woman and died at fifty-two. 'Very well. Since you are the left hand of the Lord God, scribble a note to the stores so that at least they give me back my laces and belt. Otherwise my trousers fall down. And a cap - so that I may beg alms. Better still - issue me special clothing for beggars. From that store of yours for specialists who disguise themselves as beggars. And do not forget my false teeth - so I may at least chew dry crusts...' Rising from the chair, the former chief of the secret police of the USSR said gloomily: 'Maxim Aleksanych, in your time you conducted a special survey and discovered that in Soviet Russia, despite everything, beggars receive more if they ask for Christ's sake than if they ask without Christ. And now the Red Pope wants the former servant of Satan and Antichrist, in order not to die of hunger, to wander Russia's roads and beg - for Christ's sake... The Red Pope spares the greatest villain of Russia so that he may roam the roads of Russia and say that God exists after all...'

For leading Party officials there existed a special information bulletin of the Central Committee. The latest issue of this bulletin caused much commotion in Moscow. It reported the details of the case of the former First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, former member of the Presidium of the Party's Central Committee, and former Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR, L. P. Beria - for fifteen years the unchanging executioner of Stalin. Then followed the details of the case of the former head of the Central Committee's Department of Agitation and Propaganda - Agitprop, former Minister of Culture, and former director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, G. F. Aleksandrov, once Stalin's chief liar of the Soviet Union. [203]

Beyond the usual political charges in such cases, this time the bulletin contained something new. Both the chief executioner and the chief liar of the Soviet Union were accused of the same everyday crimes. And not the usual ones. Namely - the corruption of minors.

In addition, the bulletin of the Central Committee once again returned to the case of the Jewish doctor-poisoners, arrested shortly before Stalin's death. Soon after Stalin's death it was declared that this case had been fabricated, and all the doctors were released. Now, however, the bulletin stated that this bogus Zionist conspiracy was the work of Beria, who thus sought to ingratiate himself with Stalin. Until then Muscovites had assumed that Beria himself was a Jew. And now it suddenly emerged that he was in fact the chief anti-Semite?!

In connection with this, discussions began in Moscow's Party circles. Of the chief liar of the Soviet Union it was also said that he was not really Aleksandrov, and that his maiden name was either Goldman or Silberman. It had long been the custom in the Kremlin since the Revolution: if not a Jew, then a half-Jew, and if not a half-Jew, then married to a Jewess.

And then, as ill luck would have it, the well-known Soviet writer Marietta Shaginyan decided to write a book about Lenin - The Ulyanov Family. And Marietta began digging in the archives. And she unearthed there that not only Lenin's maternal grandfather, Alexander Zender Blank, was a baptised Jew, but that his wife, Madame Groschopf, was also "of the same kind"... Official Soviet iconography had presented her as a German Lutheran, allegedly even speaking German. But the archives revealed that in reality Madame Groschopf was a Jewess and spoke Yiddish.

So Lenin's mother was by blood a full Jewess?! So, if the mother is Jewish, then by Jewish law Lenin is considered a Jew?! Oy vey! Marietta Shaginyan's mouth was hastily shut - this, they said, was a state secret. But in Moscow the rumour spread - and people began to talk. So much for the former Russian nobleman - Comrade Lenin!

The discussions in Moscow's Party circles flared up more and more. Take Chicherin - Lenin's right hand and the first People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR. At first it was said that Chicherin was a former noble of the highest rank. But then it turned out that his mother too was Jewish. If so, then by Jewish law he too was a Jew. And to remove all doubt, Chicherin also married a Jewess. Moreover, it was said of him that he was a patent pederast. You know, one of those sly fellows who worm their way through everywhere.

Or take Kerensky, who opened the doors to Lenin. Why, Kerensky's mother too was a Jewess - Kirbis! So by Jewish law he too was a Jew. Oy vey, it was like some conspiracy of Jewish mammas!

Reading the bulletin of the Central Committee, some Moscow Party men shook their heads. Strange... Even if one excludes the Jews who made the Revolution and then shot one another during the Great Purge... Still, in the Kremlin there seemed to be some enchanted circle... One way or another, almost everywhere there were either mixed marriages with Jews or the products of such marriages - half-Jews. And people began to count on their fingers: Lenin... and Stalin... and Lenin's teacher, Plekhanov... and Kerensky... and Chicherin... and Bukharin... and Molotov... and Voroshilov... and all of Stalin's children... and Khrushchev... and Brezhnev... What was this strange pattern? [337]

And then some Party men, the cleverer ones, remembered the philosopher and seeker after God Berdyaev, whom some foreign authorities consider the greatest Russian philosopher of the twentieth century, and whom the Tsarist Holy Synod had sentenced to eternal exile in Siberia. The very same strange seeker after God who preached the union of Satan and Antichrist and, as a result, the kingdom of the Prince of This World. But what did that mean?!

As though to complete all these riddles, the bulletin of the Central Committee further informed that, after many years of prohibition, for the first time in the whole period of Soviet power, a new edition of Dostoevsky's *Demons* was being prepared for print.

Older people remembered that in this banned book, where the genius Dostoevsky calls all revolutionaries demons, in the chapter which even Dostoevsky himself preferred not to publish, his chief demon - the revolutionary Stavrogin - confesses to that same strange sin in which the chief executioner Beria and the chief liar Aleksandrov were now publicly accused - the corruption of minors. [275]

Clearly the Party's Central Committee deliberated long before deciding to invoke the authority of Dostoevsky. People read the bulletin and wondered: 'They say we have already built socialism, and here is such devilry?! But what on earth is all this?'

Chapter 13. 'All Men Are Brothers'

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32
Motto inscribed on the façade of the United States Central Intelligence Agency

Over Moscow, like clouds in the sky, passed great and small events. The state security organs changed their name: MVD - MGB - KGB. But the 13th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) did not change its name. Simply because officially, it was a blank space.

Philosophers say that the devil's first effort is to prove that he does not exist, that he is no one and nothing. That is why the Soviet Inquisition, knowing the devil's formula, also pretended that it too did not exist, that it too was no one and nothing.

Philosophers assert that the devil does everything in darkness, from behind and in reverse. The Soviet Inquisition acted exactly the same. Sitting behind, the 13th Department controlled all the other twelve departments of the MVD - MGB - KGB. And not only them. For the Bible says that the devil is the prince of this world. And whoever has placed a bridle on that prince may govern many affairs of this world.

At one time, for senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, official ranks of State Counsellor of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd class were introduced, along with appropriate ceremonial uniforms adorned with gold braid, something akin to civil generals of the tsarist era. But few knew that an even more archaic senior rank had later been introduced - that of Privy State Counsellor, something like an imperial Geheimrat.

Occasionally, these privy counsellors would appear in the general's uniform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but with the shoulder boards of the 13th Department of the MVD and the relevant insignia - a bronze shield like that of military lawyers, a serpent like that of medical officers, or crossed hatchets like those of engineers or firemen. And no one really knew whom these lawyers were fighting, whom these medics were treating, or what these firemen were extinguishing. These privy counsellors usually preferred to remain in the shadows. But the state counsellors knew that the word of a Geheimrat was law.

In government circles, it was whispered quietly that although leaders in the USSR changed, one person in Moscow did not - a certain special privy counsellor to the Soviet leaders who sat behind the Soviet throne like a red pope. Then, glancing around, they whispered that this red pope sometimes wandered about Moscow in the dress of an ordinary worker, or a kolkhoznik, and sometimes even as a beggar. On such days, the red pope would remove all his highest orders of the Soviet Union and wear on his chest only a humble medal: 'For the Rescue of the Drowning'.

Even in our sober age of socialist realism, the world holds so many marvels. We simply do not notice them. Take, for instance, this marvellous story.

After Stalin's death, the most dizzying career ascent in the Soviet Union was made by Dmitry Shepilov. Previously an almost unknown figure, he suddenly, like lightning, became a member of the Central Committee, then a member of the all-powerful Presidium of the Central Committee, then editor-in-chief of the Party's main organ, the newspaper *Pravda*, and finally Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR.

However, before long, Minister of Foreign Affairs Shepilov was caught up in the case of the 'anti-Party group' of Molotov and Kaganovich, and his dizzying career reversed course just as rapidly. He was expelled from the Presidium of the Central Committee, then from the Central Committee itself, dismissed from the post of editor-in-chief of *Pravda* and from the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. Along with Molotov and Kaganovich, the anti-Party man Shepilov suddenly disappeared from the Moscow horizon.

The subsequent career of Dmitry Shepilov was later described in great detail in the Western press. Even according to a source as reliable as American intelligence.

Like many senior officials, Shepilov suffered from a stomach ulcer. But when he went, as he had in the past, to the Kremlin hospital, he was redirected to a hospital for ordinary mortals. And at the hospital for ordinary mortals, he was not admitted to a ward for gastrointestinal patients, but to a ward for the mentally ill. There his ailing soul was treated for several months, and afterwards he was declared disabled and even granted a pension - 60 roubles per month, equivalent to the wages of an unskilled labourer. And after that, say what you will, but democracy surely exists in the Soviet Union!

While the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR sat in a psychiatric hospital, his book *The Foreign Policy of the USSR* was withdrawn from circulation and pulped, and he himself was stripped of his army rank of major-general, expelled from the USSR Academy of Sciences and erased from the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*.

According to American intelligence, on 13 July 1959, the anti-Party pensioner Shepilov returned from the madhouse to his Moscow flat on Leninsky Proyezd, No. 13. Some superstitious people avoid the number 13, calling it the devil's dozen. But the anti-Party man Shepilov, evidently, thought quite the opposite.

Be that as it may, before long Shepilov was prescribed work on a kolkhoz to restore his mental balance - shovelling manure. Marshal of State Security Rudnev kept his word. Now, disgraced members of the government were no longer shot, as before, but subjected to the Tolstoyan method of 'treatment through labour'.

When the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR refused to build communism with his own hands, he was formally declared insane and confined to an asylum. Here again, the first deadly sin - pride - proved stronger than reason.

American intelligence reported this with such deep regret and sympathy, as though it would have pleased them greatly if the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR really had been mad. But Soviet intelligence was not in the least surprised. In the think tank of Professor Rudnev, they knew full well that the head of American intelligence, Allen Dulles, although his brother sat as US Secretary of State, had a son in a mental hospital. Father Dulles knew all there was to know about the world, while his son did not even recognise his own father.

In Moscow, people said that if Shepilov was mad, then he was a very cunning madman, if he had managed to climb so swiftly and so high while no one noticed a thing. Others said that this nothing had been seen quite clearly by the equally cunning Stalinists Molotov and Kaganovich, who for that very reason had pulled Shepilov upwards. That was why the lot of them were thrown out together. Apparently, even for such schemers, there was someone more cunning still.

Of course, from the point of view of higher sociology, there is nothing especially unusual about this. For instance, for a long time Rudolf Hess was Hitler's right hand, and many of the powerful of the world shook his hand obsequiously. Yet afterwards, this very same Hess spent decades in prison as a war criminal, catching sparrows that flew through his window, and was officially deemed insane.

But if you look closely, this seems to be something of an occupational disease among statesmen. For example, the Polish president Piłsudski, in his youth as a revolutionary, also spent time in a mental hospital. Later, when he became the dictator of Poland, he claimed that he had only feigned madness. Or take the case of James Forrestal, once the United States Secretary of Defence. And this was already in the era of the atomic bomb. Then suddenly, this same atomic minister was placed in a psychiatric hospital, from which he shortly afterwards jumped out of a window and died.

But in America, everyone - even those who are not mad - knows that in psychiatric hospitals for ordinary mortals, all the windows are constructed in such a way that it is absolutely impossible to jump out of them. Perhaps in psychiatric hospitals for the not-so-ordinary mortals, the windows are made differently?

Thus, some said that Forrestal had been committed to a mental hospital by his political enemies. Others said the opposite - that he had been thrown out of the window by his political friends, as political ballast.

At the same time, people recalled that after the assassination of the American national hero, President Lincoln, his widow had also been kept for a time in a psychiatric hospital - so that she would not talk too much.

In any case, compared to the democratic Forrestal, who flew out of a window, the totalitarian Shepilov got off very lightly indeed. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR simply sat in a madhouse and sang a little ditty:
Here sit the alkies, just like bun-nies,
And all the schizo-phrenics are weaving lit-tle birch besomies...

Meanwhile, the 22nd Congress of the CPSU approached. The most jaw-dropping attraction of this congress was the appearance of the old Bolshevik Dora Mazurkina. She was like a pickled mushroom of a crone - limping and lopsided - a venerable revolutionary and comrade of Lenin himself, who, in reward for her revolutionary activity, had later spent more than twenty years marinated in Stalin's concentration camps. But even behind the barbed wire, she had preached communism frothing at the mouth, for which her fellow inmates dubbed her Dora the Dotty.

Even if a troupe of naked ballerinas from a Parisian café-chantant had suddenly been released onto the Communist Party Congress stage, they would not have caused such a sensation as the lopsided old woman Dora.

The moment the midwife of the Russian revolution and intimate friend of Lenin's wife appeared on stage, the Congress of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics suddenly turned into a spiritualist séance, and the air grew thick with the scent of otherworldly marvels. Dora Mazurkina-the-Dotty candidly and earnestly confessed to the august congress that she often conversed with the spirit of the great Lenin and even received instructions from Comrade Lenin from beyond the grave about what must be done to build communism.

There was only one thing Dora did not confess: that it was precisely for this very communication with spirits that she had once been nailed up in Siberia, accused of anti-Soviet organising under Article 58, points 10 and 11. In other countries, this would have been no more than an innocent club of eccentrics dabbling in spiritualism. But in the USSR, it was regarded as a counter-revolutionary underground, where Satan fraternises with the Antichrist. And from there begins Berdyaev's alliance of Satan and the Antichrist, where the pact is signed in blood in the form of mixed marriages, all in anticipation of the kingdom of the prince of this world.

The Prime Minister of the USSR, seated on the congress presidium, leaned towards his adviser sitting next to him and whispered quietly so the others would not hear:
'What a bloody witch... Pity she wasn't shot straight away, back then.'

'You'll never shoot all of us!' Dora suddenly bellowed in a hoarse, masculine voice. 'There aren't enough bullets! For our name is legion!'

'Bloody he-ll,' the Prime Minister jolted in surprise. 'She caught my thought. Like radio reception! Maybe she really is talking to Lenin's ghost?!'

'Don't worry,' the adviser reassured the Prime Minister. 'We monitor all such chatter. By the way, do you know who that old bat is?... She's my former mother-in-law.'

'Well, in that case, frankness for frankness.' The Prime Minister smiled, though somewhat sadly. 'My first wife was one of them too - a Martian. After the revolution, everywhere you spat there were Martians. But I myself came from swineherds and didn't understand any of it. And during the Great Purge, my Martian was swept away too... Stalin made me dance the hopak. Tell me, Maksim Aleksanych, did you have children?'

'I had one daughter. But she died in childhood.'

'Then you were lucky. I had it worse - I had a daughter and a son from that Martian. As soon as the girl grew up and hit puberty, all sorts of odd things started happening. Wouldn't look at men. And in the end, she married a Martian.'

'Same story as Stalin's children,' the adviser nodded.

'Yes, but that doesn't make it easier for me,' sighed the Prime Minister. 'And when my son grew up, instead of chasing women, he chases butterflies. Not a man, but God knows what...

Like Nabokov with his “Lolita”. And then I saw Martian women starting to gather round him. Sniffed him out straight away. In short, he married a Martian too. Feed a wolf all you want, it still looks to the forest. And all this in my old age, upon my grey head... Ah, if only I’d known earlier... This ought to be introduced as a compulsory subject in the final years of secondary school.’

‘But you won’t find a textbook for that subject anywhere in the world,’ said the adviser. ‘Not in a single library. And if one appears, it’ll be burnt.’

Meanwhile, Dora Mazurkina-the-Dotty was briskly reporting to the party congress about how she communicates with the astral world. It turns out that the spirit of Comrade Lenin bitterly complains that he finds it revolting to lie in the Mausoleum next to the mummy of Stalin, who first threw all the real Leninists into the camps, and now lies next to him decomposing and - in astral form - is cheeky even towards Comrade Lenin himself.

A question came from the hall:
‘Have you summoned the spirit of Comrade Stalin?’
‘I have,’ Dora rasped in her bass voice. ‘But he just swears like a cobbler. In unprintable terms. Want to hear?’

‘Thank you,’ came a voice from the hall. ‘We believe you anyway. In light of the seriousness of the situation - since Lenin and Stalin cannot coexist even in death - the Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR has resolved to honour the request of Comrade Lenin’s spirit and has unanimously decided to eject Comrade Stalin from the Mausoleum.’

When the lights of the newsreel projectors in the hall went dark and the cinema operators began packing up their equipment, the Prime Minister again leaned towards his adviser:
‘You know, you would have made a decent film director. The whole thing was staged like a movie. And you even managed to get your mother-in-law cast as the star. I’ll have to award you some kind of prize. Or would you prefer the title of Honoured Artist of the USSR?’

Soon, on Red Square next to the Mausoleum, a new grave appeared with a heavy stone slab bearing the inscription ‘Stalin’. At the same time, rumours began to spread through Moscow that the mummy of the great Stalin had simply been burned and flushed into the sewers - so that everyone could repay him according to his deeds, his relics and his oil. Others said that beneath the slab bearing Stalin’s name, they had buried the ashes of an unknown concentration camp inmate: if anyone wanted to bow to Stalin, let them bow instead to that camp prisoner. But the most astonishing thing was that these rumours seemed to be coming from somewhere up high.

Muscovites marvelled:
‘It’s as if someone’s walking around the city eavesdropping on our thoughts and feelings.’
‘Maybe it’s him?’
‘Who?’
‘Well, you know who... the Red Pope...’

After Stalin’s death, his son, Lieutenant-General Vasily Stalin, vanished without a trace. Some said he was in a secure ward for incurable alcoholics, others - that he was in a psychiatric hospital, and still others claimed that both were under the same roof.

Later, Vasily Stalin died. Some said he had committed suicide, others - that he died from alcohol poisoning, and still others insisted it was the same thing - that he had simply committed suicide with the help of alcohol. People also recalled that Stalin's wife and Vasily's mother had also apparently committed suicide, and that Stalin's other son, Yakov, had attempted suicide as a teenager.

Of course, if you look closely, from the standpoint of higher sociology, all this is quite typical of the families of atypical people.

Meanwhile, while Moscow speculated about the fate of Vasily Stalin, one of the daughters of Sir Winston Churchill, Sarah, was legally declared an incurable alcoholic and committed to a psychiatric hospital. At the same time, Churchill's other daughter, Diana, worked for a charitable organisation that dissuaded people from suicide. But eventually Diana grew so tired of it all that she took her own life.

Stalin's daughter Svetlana, however, took a much simpler path. She grew so fed up with the communism her father had built that she ran off to the capitalists. And the capitalists - whose destruction her father had dedicated his life to - were so delighted that they welcomed her like a dear little sister.

With the help of American intelligence, Svetlana first went not just anywhere, but to Switzerland - known not only for Swiss cheese but also for its numbered secret bank accounts, where American gangsters and dictators from around the world store their hard-earned savings. Then, like seasoned gangsters, the American spies helped Svetlana open a bank account in the Principality of Liechtenstein - a little trick to avoid paying American taxes, including inheritance tax. Next, the American press began a hue and cry that Svetlana had brought with her - presumably hidden under her skirt - her memoirs, for which she had already been promised millions. Thus, another rich bride appeared in America.

Communists shouted after her that the new dollar princess was simply a mentally ill psychopath who had abandoned a string of husbands and children in Moscow. Capitalists, on the other hand, like obliging brothers, shouted the opposite - that she had recently converted to Christianity, and therefore was practically a saint. No one could make sense of who she really was: a saintly sinner or a sinful saint?

Of course, from the standpoint of dialectical Christianity, all this is very simple. One only needs to understand why the Bible says: 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves: ye shall know them by their fruits.'

And one must also know why the biblical tree of knowledge is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And why this tree is forbidden. And what these keys of knowledge are that are mentioned in the Bible. And why some learned people say that these keys are poisoned.

In the course of de-Stalinisation, Professor Rudnev's think tank was renamed the Scientific Research Institute - SRI-13. At the same time, alongside SRI-13, a new Institute of Higher Sociology was established under the auspices of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Once upon a time in the USSR there had been the Institute of Red Professorship, where, after the revolution, new red cadres were hastily churned out. Now, however, the highest cadres of the Party and the Soviet government were polished in the new Institute of Higher Sociology. But this educational institution was strictly classified. And beneath the white lab coats of all the professors, like a devil's tail, peeked the uniform of the 13th Department of the MVD, or SRI-13.

Therefore, unofficially and by analogy with the former Institute of Red Professorship, this new institution was soon nicknamed the Institute of Black Professorship. And after listening to some of this higher sociology, the students themselves soon renamed it Black Sociology. [713]

In the lecture halls sat specially selected leaders of the Party and Soviet government - members of the Supreme Soviet, ministers, generals of the atomic forces and admirals of the atomic fleets. Some of them grumbled that in their old age, and with general's epaulettes, they were once again having to study. But after a few lectures, they no longer complained.

Others complained that the screening and selection for these courses were far too stringent - that when testing for syphilis, one blood sample was enough, but here they took several. They even checked all relatives, not only the living but the dead. It seemed they were testing for some disease far worse than syphilis. But these complaints ceased after one of the attendees, a decorated general, suddenly shot his wife and three children, then shot himself, leaving behind a mysterious note: 'I can no longer live with them. Nor without them. I wish I had never known!'

Higher sociology began with a brief overview of religious cults: how social formations, states and religions came into being and perished; how strange phallic cults appeared in the twilight of certain ancient civilisations; how resplendent Hellas fell, how proud Rome collapsed, and how a new religion - Christianity - arose upon the ruins of the pagan Roman Empire. [392]

Then the professors turned to the Bible and, using the Marxist method of dialectical materialism, decrypted the biblical keys of knowledge. Since God dwells in heaven and the devil on earth, and since the Bible says that the devil is the prince of this world, the specialists of the Scientific Research Institute - SRI-13 - wasted no time in seizing that devil by the horns. As it turned out, from the standpoint of dialectical Christianity, the devil is merely a complex social disease known as degeneration or decay. And this degenerative devil consists of three parts: mental illness, sexual perversion, and certain physical deformities of the body. That's all. So simple.

However, this biological degeneration played a very substantial role in the decline and destruction of Ancient Greece and Rome. Bearing this in mind, Christianity, which arose amid the wreckage of Rome and Greece, in the Middle Ages simply began to burn degenerates at the stake, calling them witches and sorcerers. To support this, the professors of the Soviet Inquisition read aloud protocols from the mediaeval Inquisition. Some members of the Soviet government sat at their desks yawning. Or doodled little devils in their notebooks.

'Incidentally,' said General-Professor Dobronravov, 'from the perspective of higher sociology, Karl Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and Hitler were all the same kind of degenerates. In the good old days, they would have ended up at the Inquisition's stake.'

After such blasphemy, the yawning in the hall stopped. The listeners shook their heads in astonishment and waited to see what would come next.

What followed was the power complex, which produces what is known as the born leader, starting with African witch-doctors and Siberian shamans and ending with Lenin, Stalin and Hitler.

When Western sociologists began studying African witch-doctors, they discovered something strange. The majority of these witch-doctors, from a clinical standpoint, were what civilised countries call psychopaths, psychotics or neurotics - that is, mentally ill. From a sexual standpoint, most of them exhibited perversions. That is, the majority were typical degenerates. And yet in the context of primitive African society - so to speak, under the most natural conditions of primitive democracy - these degenerates, for some mysterious reason, became the sorcerers, priests or chiefs of their communities. But why?

When Russian scientists, even before the revolution, studied Siberian shamans in a similar fashion, they found the same strange phenomenon. Most Siberian shamans were also epileptic psychopaths, psychotics, neurotics and sexual deviants - just like the African witch-doctors. Entirely different parts of the world - and the same phenomenon. It must be some sort of regularity. But what kind?

To investigate this mystery, a special expedition from the 13th Department of the NKVD was sent to the shamans. Of course, the NKVD could not have cared less about Siberian shamans or African witch-doctors. What interested them was a more practical matter: might this strange regularity also apply to the leaders of the modern civilised world?

At this point, to connect the dots, the specialists at SRI-13 turned to another field - sexual psychopathology. The key to the power complex was hidden in a dark recess that few ever explore - that grimy and murky corner known as sadism. Speaking of sadism, most authoritative scholars conclude that its psychological root is the will to power - a morbid, pathological compulsion to dominate, to command, to rule. And once such a sadist gains power, the opportunity to torment others - not just psychologically, but physically - presents itself automatically.

‘For example,’ said General of Psychopathology Karpov, ‘under the pretext of forced collectivisation and industrialisation. That is called the sublimation of sadism into politics.’

Philosophers often call the devil two-faced, because two extremes converge in him: genius and madness, sadism and masochism, murder and suicide. And if one regards degeneration as the tree of evil, then that tree is fiendishly tangled. For instance, sadism generates the power complex, which often leads to actual power. But sadism is only one of the branches of this tree of evil. Typically, sadism is linked in some way to homosexuality - full or partial, open or hidden, latent or repressed. It is a kind of payment for power, for glory, for greatness.

And everything here is deeply deceptive. For example, you might naturally think that full and open homosexuality is the worst case. But in fact, it is quite the opposite. The greatest number of mental illnesses, and in the most acute forms, arise from hidden, partial or repressed homosexuality. Moreover, for every honest, open pederast, there are ten hidden, partial or repressed pederasts. And it is precisely this obscure category that yields the largest number of psychopaths - those who become professional revolutionaries, anarchists, nihilists,

terrorists, extremists, communists or Nazis, and if successful, dictators, leaders, premiers or presidents.

‘That is why philosophers say,’ remarked Professor Toptygin, ‘that the devil is not dangerous when he appears and frightens us, but when we do not see him. Etch this formula into your minds. And underline it in your notes, which you call “The Red Gospel”.’

Following the decryption of the formula of power came the next course, entitled simply: *The Tree of Evil*. General-Professor Bykov hung up a large chart depicting what looked like a withered tree, with a mass of branches, twigs, knots and grotesque curls.

As you can see,’ the professor pointed with a pointer, ‘the roots of this tree of evil lie in incest, that is, an exaggerated, pathological love between relatives which at first creates a morbid attachment, a psychological fixation, and in extreme cases leads to direct sexual relations. Notice how, from the very beginning, the devil of degeneration hides behind the most seemingly noble human feelings, driving them to absurd extremes. Even here, the devil is an extremist.’

‘In Ancient Egypt, marriages between relatives were common in the families of the pharaohs. In our time, such pharaonic marriages, between cousins, were found in the cases of Albert Einstein and President Franklin Roosevelt. The mothers of Einstein and his second wife Elsa were sisters, and their fathers were first cousins. This marriage produced no children. Einstein’s son from his first marriage, Eduard, had already been in an asylum.

But another product of such a pharaonic marriage was one Adolf Hitler. Hitler’s father married the daughter of his own first cousin, meaning Hitler’s parents were third-degree relatives. And you already know the consequences of that. That is why, knowing these roots of evil, the Orthodox Church prohibited marriages between relatives up to the seventh degree of kinship.

In marriages between relatives, owing to the repeated layering of identical genetic characteristics, children are born in whom certain traits are overdeveloped, but at the cost of underdevelopment in others. As a result, such people turn out to be emotionally unstable, and ultimately either geniuses or idiots. Or, worse still, brilliant madmen like Hitler. And then the mad Hitler starts hunting the brilliant Einstein, for whose head Hitler even set a special bounty of 20,000 marks.

Having analysed the roots of the tree of evil, the professor moved on to its trunk. This trunk was homosexuality in all its forms: overt and covert, total or partial, latent or repressed, active or passive, male and female. What was once called the devils incubus and succubus, who turn men into women and women into men.

And in the branches of this tree of evil roosted all sorts of other demons, which in our time are simply referred to as nervous, emotional, or mental illnesses: paranoia, megalomania, persecution mania, schizophrenia or split personality, manic depression, egocentrism and egomania, narcissism, self-destruction complex, castration complex, epilepsy, hysteria, hypochondria, alcoholism, drug addiction, nymphomania, satyriasis or the Don Juan complex, sadism, masochism, sadomasochism, fetishism, voyeurism, vampirism, cannibalism, exhibitionism, coprophilia, urophilia, the Lolita complex, oral eroticism, cunnilingus and fellatio, transvestism, hermaphroditism, nervous paralyses, degenerative

senile dementia, kleptomania, claustrophobia and agoraphobia, bestiality and necrophilia and so on and so forth. There was no end to it! Everything, down to prostitution and pornography, male impotence and female frigidity, which in most cases also are not simply random occurrences, but are a kind of pathological psychosis.

That is why they say: find the man, and the article will follow.

'If we consider degeneration as a whole,' Professor Bykov continued, 'it represents something like the ageing and dying off of an entire social group, class, or nation. And the best medicine against degeneration is the infusion of fresh blood, when different classes or neighbouring peoples and nations live in peace and friendship, marry, and mix their blood. That is why one of the fundamental postulates of Christianity is "All men are brothers!"

Hence the apostles of communism, most of whom were obvious degenerates, feeling it in their own skin, also produced a similar slogan - of a classless society. But by what means? By the means of class slaughter! And here we come to the problem of the Antichrist.

What is the Antichrist, or anti-Christianity? It is the antithesis of the postulate "All men are brothers!" An example of this is Hitler and his theory of the master race, with the Nuremberg racial laws, with the prohibition of mixed marriages with foreigners, and so on. But here a small question logically arises' - the professor winced slightly - 'did Hitler invent this theory of the master race himself, or did he simply borrow it? And if he did borrow it, then from whom? And against whom was this theory primarily directed? Incidentally, in full accordance with the Marxist law of the unity and struggle of opposites. This is one of the many paradoxes of higher sociology. I warn you, these questions will be on the exam. So get your brains working. Learn to think for yourselves.'

After that, practical exercises began. The students were given individual assignments and granted access to a special library, where biographical data had been gathered from around the world on Karl Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Hitler, and other great men of this world. Then came seminars, in which the students presented their research findings to the audience.

As a result, some members of the Soviet government proposed that after Stalin, it would not be a bad idea to remove Lenin from the Mausoleum as well.

'Do not get carried away,' the professors were reassured. 'A dead lion is no threat to us. Besides, if we follow that path, we would have to clear the tombs of nearly all the great figures of history. That is why this thing is called - the Prince of This World.'

Parallel to this was a course in which another biblical key to knowledge was deciphered - the one concerning the legion. In the timetable this course was simply titled "Legion", and its stated aim was to determine the size of that legion. As a result, new scientific terms appeared - legionisation and legionnaires.

To this end, the specialists of the 13th Department used the statistics of the American doctor Kinsey, which had been adopted as the standard reference work on this subject not only in the Western world but also in the USSR. In the complex syndrome of degeneration or legionisation, the most obvious component, which can more or less be counted, is homosexuality, which serves as the trunk of this tree of evil. This was precisely the focus of Dr Kinsey's statistics.

It turns out that in a good, civilised society such as the United States, 37 percent of the population have, to a greater or lesser extent and in one form or another, already experienced homosexuality. That is, 74 million people out of a population of 200 million. And indeed, it turns out that their name is legion! Of this legion, only 4 percent were honest, full, and open homosexuals. The remaining 33 percent - that is, 66 million people - engaged in this very thing quietly, partially, or in passing: for five years, three years, one year, or once, or even only dreamt of it in their sleep - but up to the point of orgasm. That is, for every overt legionnaire, there were nearly ten covert ones.

But the crux is that sexual perversions - in this case homosexuality - are only one part of the legionisation complex. The second part consists of mental illnesses. On this matter, the American Joint Commission on Mental Illness in the USA states that every fourth American experiences a serious mental problem and cannot do without immediate medical help. Subsequent statistics say that 18.5 percent of Americans - that is, 37 million people - are clearly mentally ill. The rest are running around the streets.

General-Professor Dobronravov summed it up:

‘So, 37 percent legionnaires and 18.5 percent mentally ill. Precisely half. That is, roughly every second legionnaire, besides homosexuality, is also mentally ill. This is schematic, to help you grasp the connection. In reality, it is much more complex. The combinations here are like those in a kaleidoscope.’

Moreover, these are average figures across the entire US population, including all social classes. But legionisation is not evenly distributed; it is directly proportional to social level: the higher the level, the greater the incidence. For instance, every psychiatrist knows that the greatest number of mental illnesses occurs among the intelligentsia. That is why some philosophers say that the highest intellect borders on madness.

Very well, if legionnaires make up 37 percent across America, how many are there among the intelligentsia? The relevant statistics indicate more than 50 percent. But for the sake of simplifying the accounting, we consider it exactly half. As citizen Trotsky used to say: ‘The fish rots from the head.’

Knowing this, you can understand one of the riddles of the Soviet revolution. The most revolutionary class in Russia was the left-wing intelligentsia, which was even referred to as the order of the Russian intelligentsia. And by this order was meant precisely that legion. From the perspective of higher sociology, this was a kind of mass suicide of a diseased class. Recall the biblical parable of the legion and the herd of swine who rush off the cliff into the sea and perish.

As you know, the breeding ground of the revolutionary movement in Russia was the student body. And now, all over the world - especially in America - there is a whole epidemic of student revolts. Why students specifically? The reason is the same: this is the future intelligentsia, among whom 50 percent are legionnaires. Moreover, age also plays a role here. At student age, 18 to 25 years, the sexual instinct expresses itself most strongly - and with it, related psychoses. That is the whole mystery behind these irrational student uprisings. In the past, they used to say, ‘He’s got piss on the brain’; now they say - hormones.

Now let us turn to modern philosophy. One of the apostles of existentialist philosophy - Kierkegaard - says that in our time, the devil has taken up residence in printing ink. What does this mean? Is he so clever, such a philosopher, and we so stupid? Well then, who knows - raise your hand!

But the audience remained bashfully silent. Then someone muttered, 'D-damn if I know...'

'Absolutely correct,' nodded the General-Professor. 'The devil! If 50 percent of the intelligentsia are, in one way or another, involved with the devil, then what can we say about literary figures, poets, and writers? Since ancient times, they have been called rulers of human souls. We call them engineers of human souls. And it is expected that their intelligence should be above the level of the average intellectual. But in direct proportion to intelligence, legionisation also increases. And the relevant statistics say that among literary figures, legionnaires are not 50 percent, but over 75 percent. But for ease of bookkeeping, we assume exactly 75 percent - that is, three out of four already have various problems in the realm of Dr Kinsey, Freud, and so forth.

All of this is well known to such specialists as the hunchbacked philosopher Kierkegaard. That is why he philosophises that in our time the devil has taken up residence in printing ink. He is echoed by the Nobel laureate and pederast André Gide, who says that no book is written without the help of the devil. That is why the famous philosopher Plato, in his blueprint for a communist society, made it a compulsory condition to expel all poets beyond the borders of the state. That is why, during the Great Purge, Stalin drove almost half of the Union of Soviet Writers to Siberia.

By the way, write this down: existentialism is the philosophy and literature of legionnaires, or, to put it more politely, decadence. You see how simple it all is. If one possesses the biblical keys to knowledge. We shall turn you into such philosophers here, such academics, that you will not recognise yourselves.

For now, just engrave these three numbers into your memory: 37 percent on average, 50 percent among the intelligentsia, and 75 percent among literary figures, poets, and writers. In higher sociology, one must remember this like the multiplication table: 37 percent - 50 percent - 75 percent. That is for a country like the USA. But these coefficients vary depending on the level of culture and civilisation of a given country or nation. And on other factors. For example, in the USSR, as a result of the revolution, these coefficients are lower. Any questions?

A plaintive voice called out from the audience:

'Comrade Professor, you say that 75 percent of literary figures are, you know... But what about literature teachers? You see, my wife teaches literature. And you've frightened me...'

'Well, let's see,' the professor smiled. 'What is a literary critic? A failed writer. And what is a literature teacher? A failed literary critic. So the distance is considerable, and I think you have nothing to worry about.'

Thus the months passed, one after another. Gradually, new words were born in the Soviet lexicon. Previously there had been the disenfranchised and the promoted; now there appeared the degenerates and the perverts. Following collectivisation came legionisation, and after the

militiamen - the legionnaires. Once there had been venereologists; now there were degenerologists. And these illnesses were far worse than syphilis.

Moving from theory to practice, the professors of higher sociology analysed the prospects of overpopulation of the Earth, atomic war, mutual annihilation of the white race, the yellow peril, and the black peril. Was the atomic bomb not created precisely as a weight on the scales of some higher equilibrium? All that is lacking is a mad legionnaire who would start such a war, and whom the other legionnaires would later, as usual, call a genius. But this atomic war would be worse than what is described in the Apocalypse!

Seated at the desks were party and government leaders of the USSR: ministers, marshals, members of the Supreme Soviet, generals of the atomic forces and admirals of the nuclear fleets. They listened to all this and frowned gloomily, scribbling in their notebooks, which had earned the nickname “The Red Gospel”.

They had witnessed the collapse and disintegration of the cult of deifying Stalin. Now, in place of the worn-out Marxism-Leninism came something new and at the same time something very old, vast and important. Something secret, yet simultaneously familiar, simple, and logical! The very thing in which people - their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers - had believed for thousands of years: God and the devil - the keys to good and evil, reason and madness, life and death.

Speaking of revolutions, the professors of the Scientific Research Institute - NII-13 - shook their heads sceptically.

‘Yes, indeed, we woke the Chinese dragon, and now it’s biting us in the side. At first, they begged us for weapons and money, and now they threaten to seize Siberia from us. And what results is a Genghis Khan with an atomic bomb. By the way, the Western press reports that at a Chinese Politburo conference in Lushan, Mao openly admitted that one of his sons died in Korea, and the other lost his mind and is in an asylum.’

‘That is why the Bible says: by their fruits you shall know them. And no wonder the American press writes that, according to US intelligence, Mao is, to a certain degree, mad as well. A small detail: Mao is not only a professional revolutionary, but also a poet. And right next to him is another poet of the same sort - Ho Chi Minh. Now remember the 75 percent.’

‘Just like our story with Mao, the Americans had their own with Castro. After all, the Americans - meaning their press and State Department - were the first to help Castro seize power in Cuba. And now they are ashamed to remember it. They hope people have short memories. But we remember. And then, because of that very same Castro, they scream about the threat of nuclear war between the USSR and the USA. And then that very same Castro starts flirting with Mao of China.’

‘At the time, the American press reported that Fidel Castro’s brother, Raúl Castro, Cuba’s Minister of Defence, incidentally with shoulder-length hair, was a completely open pederast and sadist who personally carried out executions. And now recall the connection between sadism and the power complex.’

‘But here a question arises: is it not precisely because of this that the brothers in the American press and the State Department once so enthusiastically supported the Castro

brothers? For this legion is the party of parties and the union of unions. They sense each other through the air. And the sense of party allegiance, the sense of solidarity among legionnaires, is much stronger than among Communist Party members. You know the slogan “One for all, and all for one”? It was originally invented by legionnaires, and they use it to this day.’

‘But since the devil is the first extremist, it often results in the opposite extreme. That is why the American press now notes with disappointment that after the revolution, Castro opened special concentration camps for homosexuals in Cuba. Castro simply knows from where to expect the next revolutionaries. So make sense of all that if you can. One way or another, revolution and revolutionaries are a slippery and dangerous thing.’

The next course was called “Dialectical Christianity”. Here the professors warned that the devil of legionisation is a cunning trickster and confounder, that most legionnaires are not even particularly bad people, many are even good, and some are even righteous and saints. After all, the devil also tempted Jesus Christ - but did not succeed! And only a minority of legionnaires are true sinners. But the point is that this sinful minority accounts for the majority of all evils and disasters of the human race, starting from the simplest cases of a husband divorcing his wife and ending with the most terrible diseases, vices and crimes - both criminal and political - up to and including world wars and revolutions, as in the cases of Lenin, Hitler, and Stalin. That is why in the Bible this devil is called the enemy of mankind.

‘Taking all this into account, from the point of view of dialectical Christianity, no one is responsible for how they were born. Their parents are responsible for that. A person is only responsible for their actions. Moreover, the dividing line between the righteous and the sinners runs not through the flesh, but through the spirit. It is not a biological boundary, but a spiritual one, and it runs within the legion. And here we come to the question of religion, the question of the salvation of the soul. But if, despite all these liberal concessions, a given legionnaire nevertheless sins - for instance, rebels against Soviet power, then...’ Here General-Professor Kuroschupov, who was also Chairman of the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, shook his finger meaningfully: ‘Then for these sins this sinner will answer not only in Heaven before God, but also on Earth - before the 13th Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR.’ He then shrugged: ‘And where have we arrived? Why, simply at modern psychology! Dostoevsky, Freud, Kinsey, existentialism, modernism. And even a little further... And a little deeper...’

Then came courses so difficult that they are hard even to describe. For example, the theory of Christ and Antichrist. Or the theory of Martians who allegedly seek to seize power on Earth.

In higher mathematics there are integrals and differentials - theoretical devices by which many practical problems can be solved. And in higher sociology, that role is played by Christ and Antichrist.

For example, from the point of view of dialectical Christianity, the Antichrist is simply Hitlerite Nazism raised to the level of religion. And from the point of view of higher sociology, he is the chief supplier of degeneration - the court supplier of the Prince of This World. But these are matters so complex and secret that it is better not to speak of them.

From the outset, students at the Institute of the Black Professorship were strictly forbidden to take their notes outside the building. Each had their own desk with drawers and locks. Moreover, the contents of the lectures were handed out in printed summaries, which were

then filed in a special red folder stamped “Top Secret”. It was this red folder that the students called “The Red Gospel”.

Professors of the Soviet Inquisition constantly emphasised that the legion is a paradoxical entity, that it contains more combinations than a chessboard, and that without the legionnaires, life would be extraordinarily dull and wearisome. Just imagine - no murders or suicides, no wars or revolutions, not even any divorces between husbands and wives. Life would be so empty, grey, and monotonous, like that paradise depicted in Bosch’s paintings, and poor writer-scribblers would have nothing at all to write about.

But since the devil is, on the one hand, the Prince of This World, and on the other, a liar and the father of lies, writers must take the following into account. Tell the truth about the legion, and they will crucify you like Jesus Christ. But if you do what in theological terms is called *osculum infame* - that is, kiss the devil’s backside - then the invisible legion will raise you to the heavens. Just as happened with Pasternak and Yevtushenko. So, writer, the choice is yours.

Therefore, let us leave the devil alone and speak of something else. Let us speak of people instead. And you will see that the devil is not as fearsome as he is painted.

After Stalin’s death and the liquidation of Beria, some of the prisoners from the concentration camps and special isolation wards were released. Many of the victims of the Great Purge had been exiled without the right to correspondence and had long since been presumed dead. Now, these living corpses suddenly began returning to Moscow.

Thus, the heroine of the revolution Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli, half-princess and half-Martian, came back to life, as did her limping brother - the semi-hero of Perekop. They quietly settled in Berezovka, a dacha village not far from Moscow, and lived on a small pension.

The former hero of Perekop was now entirely grey-haired. He spent all his days sitting on the porch, warming his old bones in the sun and sulking in silence. Only occasionally, when old comrades from Siberian exile came to visit, would the former hero perk up and, waving his arms about, repeat for the hundredth time that he had suffered completely innocently, merely because he had had an affair with the wife of an NKVD officer. And when the officer found out, he shot his wife, and sent him, the hero of Perekop, off to Siberia along with his sister.

Zinaida Genrikhovna, on the other hand, barely left her room and even locked the door from the inside with a hook, as though she were constantly afraid of something. The hero of Perekop said that this tendency towards seclusion had arisen as a result of her many years of confinement in special isolation wards. This isolation had affected her so deeply that she, poor thing, had lost contact with her surroundings and now isolated herself.

In order to restore her lost inner balance, Zinaida Genrikhovna, once a pupil of the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens and a former general of the Cheka-GPU-NKVD, now sat and wrote a book about the injustices of the Great Purge, in which Stalin destroyed the best and truest revolutionaries. A book that would make people read and weep.

And the semi-hero of Perekop sat on the porch and threatened that if the book were not published in the Soviet Union, he, like Pasternak, would send it abroad for publication, where he had kindred spirits - good people who loved freedom and truth.

But not all such people are good. It is said that the ones to fear most are your good friends, who later gossip behind your back. That was precisely what happened to the semi-hero of Perekop.

His best friends were two Siberians who had worked with him for a long time at a brick factory, where they had even earned official certificates as bricklayers of the third and fourth categories. And then these friends sat and gossiped:

‘What was that hero imprisoned for, anyway?’ said the third-category bricklayer.

‘For the “Blue Star” case,’ said the fourth-category bricklayer. ‘You know, some of them were sent abroad in 1922. And the rest were swept up during the Great Purge.’

Then came things that really could only be printed abroad.

‘Listen, that hero used to tell tall tales that some empress supposedly died under a stallion. And then he would blather on that he too was such a superman that ordinary women couldn’t satisfy him. When he was the hero of Perekop, he had a white mare. And he swore that he had done it with that white mare...’

‘I know. And after the white mare, he had a motorcycle. And when he got drunk, he’d say he’d done it with the motorcycle too... But in fact, he’s impotent and schizophrenic - he doesn’t know himself what’s true and what’s false. And he’s got delusions of grandeur as well.’

‘And what was he before?’

‘First, he was in a school for defective children. Then he was a ladies’ hairdresser. And he himself was a bit of a lady. A pansy boy. Then he had a little fling with his own sister.’

‘Wait, how could that be, if he’s impotent?’

‘Oh, how? Very simply. In the French style.’

‘Then why is he always banging on about an affair with some NKVD officer’s wife?’

‘There was an affair. Only it wasn’t his - it was his sister Zinaida Genrikhovna’s. An ordinary story. The brother was a woman at heart, and the sister was a man at heart. Everything was the wrong way round. He - in a school for defectives, and she - a Smolny girl, beautiful and clever, from the hereditary nobility. A muslin damsel - and a sadist. She devoured Charskaya’s novels - and went to work for the Cheka. A Soviet Joan of Arc. Although she was drawn to women, she struggled against it... until she met a certain Olga, the wife of one of her NKVD colleagues.’

‘Aha, now I see. So she, the wife, seduced her?’

‘No, no. Quite the opposite. This Olga was a real snake. Androgynous, double-dealing, an opportunist. And she seduced even this Joan of Arc. For Olga, it was just another diversion. But for NKVD General Zinaida Genrikhovna, it was a real, great love - the first and last in her life. Just like in Charskaya’s novels. Only with a different ending.’

‘And what happened next?’

‘Then Olga got entangled with some other woman. Some even say she got involved with Stalin’s own wife. (See the book *Memoirs of Litvinov*, with a preface by Professor Carr and General Bedell Smith, Morrow Publishers, New York.) And poor Joan of Arc couldn’t bear the betrayal.

She shot Olga with her husband’s pistol. And staged everything to look like a suicide. But then the affair was somehow uncovered, and little Zinochka was swept up for murder. Incidentally, both of them were half-breeds...’

‘What do you mean, half-breeds?’

‘Well, you know what I mean... Those kinds of things...’
Then followed such details, such a variety of particulars, that they could not be printed even abroad.

‘Listen,’ said the third-category bricklayer, ‘how do you know all this so well?’

‘How could I not,’ the fourth-category bricklayer replied with a bitter smirk. ‘Before Siberia, I was a psychiatrist. And my father was a psychiatrist too, in Petersburg - one of the first Freudians in Russia. And he was one of the leaders of this “Blue Star”. That’s why they swept me up. You know, children often have to answer for the sins of their parents.’

Among such children was also the former king of Moscow’s bandits, Fedka the Cross-Eyed. He too was alive and well. Even in the concentration camp, with help from the Prince of This World, he managed to climb his way up to a minor princeling - he became a brigade leader and used a club to discipline other inmates, especially political ones, whom he contemptuously referred to as “contriks”. When he was told he was being released, Fedka the Cross-Eyed grew thoughtful.

Then he smacked the first contrik he saw - a former Soviet writer - with his club, and forced him to write a petition to the camp commandant. In that petition, playing on Soviet patriotism, Fedka asked to remain in the camp voluntarily as a hired worker.

‘How can I live without you, brothers, you contriks?!’ Fedka the Cross-Eyed grinned and lovingly gave the writer another swipe with his club. ‘There you go, you inky soul - a fine theme for a patriotic story.’

But as the saying goes, a club has two ends - just like the law of the unity and struggle of opposites. According to that tricky law of Marxist dialectics, if Fedka the Cross-Eyed loved swinging the club, then his brother - the poet, drug addict, and permanent revolutionary Ivan Strannik - died under such clubs in some other concentration camp.

Of course, the Freudians will say that one son of the witch Mara was simply a sadist, and the other was a masochist who willingly crawled under those clubs. Either way, Ivan Strannik died. That is, he died, but not entirely. Firstly, he was posthumously rehabilitated. And secondly...

Back in the day, Ivan Strannik belonged to the sect of God-seekers, who modernised the Gospel and claimed that eternal life consisted simply in one's children. Accordingly, to secure eternal life, Ivan Strannik named his son Ivan Junior, which was meant to symbolise reincarnation of the soul, or, as clever people say, reincarnation. And indeed! Ivan Strannik Junior turned out exactly like his father. He too was a poet, with a modernist bent. When, in male company, people began to talk about women, our poet would suddenly veer into such modernist nonsense that not everyone could even understand what he meant. Our modernist, quivering with passion, would shout:

'Ah, I do love to lick...'

But the Freudians, ever prosaic, say that this is not a French joke but latent homosexuality - and the main source of most mental illnesses. [715]

And when people talk about their parents, Vanya Strannik, with pain in his heart, suddenly shrieks hysterically:
'I wasn't made with a finger, I'm the real deal...'

Clearly, the poet is also tormented a little by the sins of his forebears. But that doesn't stop him from sinning himself. He continues to sow tares. Recently, somehow or other, he produced a son, named him Ivan III, and proudly shows him off:
'Look what a marvellous little child!'

What will become of Ivan III will only become clear in eighteen years, when he reaches sexual maturity and the associated psychoses begin to appear. In the meantime, Ivan II, following in the footsteps of Ivan I, body and soul, has joined the new generation of Soviet rebel writers and avant-garde poets who, once again, find they lack freedom. Those very same lovers of liberty who, in the Soviet Union, now find themselves either placed in psychiatric hospitals or "treated" through labour in special camps.

So try to sort all this out, who is right and who is to blame. Even the devil himself couldn't untangle it. And in polite society one shouldn't speak of such things at all. Otherwise, good people will immediately appear - liberals and humanists, and very cultured too - who will become terribly agitated and insist that all this talk of degeneration and decline is nothing more than the same kind of tall tales as the medieval stories of witches and sorcerers. And it's better not to argue. Otherwise, you'll end up quarrelling with half your acquaintances.

The house under the golden cockerel was renovated anew. They re-gilded the golden cockerel on the roof, which, according to old Russian beliefs, serves to ward off evil spirits. As part of the liberalisation campaign, the green fence topped with barbed wire was removed, and the old cast-iron railings were painted a pleasant cream colour. After that, the butler Nikolai personally went around inviting local boys to climb over the railings and pick apples in the garden. But they say there were few takers.

They say that at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow, by the walls of the old convent, next to the grave of Stalin's wife, there is another, rather unusual grave. On a red granite headstone is carved a delicate female profile, gentle and innocent, like that of a silent angel. Beneath the name of the deceased stands a strange biblical epitaph:
'My name is Legion, for we are many.'
And on the reverse side of the granite, red like dried blood, is carved the sinister, cryptic, long-forgotten emblem of the Great Purge - a serpent and a sword. And below that, equally mysterious words:

In punishment the whole world shall tremble,
And even Satan shall be struck with dread...

It is also strange that instead of flowers, the grave is planted with weeds - belladonna, also known as deadly nightshade, sleeping stupor, or mad berry. And at the head of the grave droops the branches of a weeping willow. Though it is clear that cemetery caretakers tend the grave carefully, no one visits it. And some passers-by, having read the eerie epitaph and looked at the serpent and the sword, suddenly glance around in fear and quicken their steps to get away from that place as fast as possible.

Only occasionally, perhaps once a year, when summer twilight descends over the Novodevichy Cemetery, a thin man of indeterminate appearance and age quietly approaches the forsaken grave, with a face so weary it seems he has lived a thousand years. Just as wearily he sinks down onto the grass beside the grave and sits there for a long time, his back resting against the weeping willow, inhaling the scent of the belladonna flowers - sweet and stupefying, like memories of youth - gazing at the setting sun and the darkening sky, like a life fading away, as though resting after long and heavy labour, or perhaps remembering something, like a repentant criminal drawn back to the scene of the crime.

The cemetery watchmen - even Soviet ones - are not afraid of ghosts. But when they catch sight of that man, they do their best to stay away from the graveyard and hole up in their guardhouse, quietly crossing themselves.

'Did you see him?' says one. 'His eyes - they're like a lizard's, you know... green.'

'And they glow in the twilight,' says the other. 'And his hair's... well, it's red. And right next to him lies Stalin's wife. That can't be a coincidence.'

'Yeah... and you can't tell his age either... Like he's immortal.'

'And notice - when he walks, he doesn't cast a shadow... You know what that means?'

'I do... It means that it's him, it really is... Oh Lord, preserve me and have mercy!'

And so secret rumours spread around Moscow. They say - they say insistently - that ministers and marshals change in Moscow, writers and poets come and go, everything changes. Sometimes even Soviet leaders are replaced. But one man in Moscow never changes - the secret adviser to the Soviet rulers. And then people whisper quietly: 'The Red Pope...'

They also say that the Red Pope now walks around Moscow more and more often like an ordinary Soviet citizen. And they even say you can recognise him by a single small detail: he wears on his chest only a plain medal - ‘For the Rescue of the Drowning’.

And all around him swirl all sorts of dark legends. The kind of legends that are almost indecent to repeat.

But, truth be told, there is nothing especially surprising in any of this. After all, they say the leaders of the Western world also sometimes have their own special, secret advisers. And strange legends swirl around them as well. The sort that are indecent even to recount. Carry on like that and, like the philosopher Berdyaev, you might end up invoking not only Satan, but the Antichrist as well.

And so ends the sorrowful tale of Maksim Rudnev, Marshal of State Security of the USSR, Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Sociology, obscurantist and reactionary, Hero of the Soviet Union and Hero of Socialist Labour - the Soviet Doctor Faust, who found the keys to knowledge of good and evil, reason and madness, life and death. But those keys were poisoned.

So ends the extraordinary story of Maksim Rudnev, who once prayed to God to make him great and strong. Though some say it was the devil who overheard his prayer.

Well then, that’s that, it seems. Ah yes... But what about Boris Rudnev? you’ll ask. He lives quietly, you know - neither a candle to God nor a poker to the devil.

Shortly after Stalin’s death, during the reorganisation of the Agitprop department, this Doubting Thomas received an overseas posting and left Moscow - and the house under the golden cockerel - for a long time. Since he believed neither in God nor in the devil, though he had eyes and ears, he neither saw nor heard half of what was going on around him. As a result, his life was so grey and so dull that there was nothing worth writing about.

But then, precisely because of this disbelief, that Doubting Thomas found himself in such an unbelievable situation, such a muddle, such an uproar that it defies telling or description. A phantasmagoria so outlandish that it calls for a separate book. And since he, a former Agitprop instructor, knows how to write - let him write that book himself. As for us - it is time to end.

And it seems fitting to conclude this sorrowful chronicle of Russia’s time of troubles with the ancient formula of the old Russian chroniclers:

‘And if anywhere in this book it is written rudely by my hand or through my careless neglect, I beg you: do not bear ill will towards my wretchedness, do not curse me, but correct it, for it was not written by an angel of God, but by a sinful man full of ignorance.’

And if the curious reader is interested in the anonymous figure of the scribe who wrote down this secret chronicle in the blood of his heart, then I, a Soviet slave of God - let my name be forgotten - wrote this down only because once, in my own sinful foolishness, I did not believe in God or the devil. And I thought, blind fool that I was, that I knew everything and everyone. But later, when I myself encountered that which was once called the devil, and when I saw

clearly, I regretted it very, very much - oh, how bitterly I regretted not having known it sooner.

And so, to atone for my sins, I wish to help good people with one piece of good advice: remember that the Lord God was, is, and shall be; that He is almighty, all-good, and all-merciful - but He dwells in Heaven, while the devil, the Prince of This World, lives on Earth - among us.

New York,
18 August 1970

Glossary updates: [3, 28, 40, 50, 86, 113, 144, 172, 201, 227, 276, 352]

- *Geheimrat*: rendered as *privy counsellor*; canonical form established.
- *Pravda*: rendered in italics as the newspaper title.
- Dmitry Shepilov: new proper name introduced.
- Allen Dulles: new proper name introduced; brother implied to be John Foster Dulles.
- Leninsky Proyezd: used for ‘Ленинский проезд’ (TN: common rendering in English-language sources).
- Dora Mazurkina: introduced in this segment; referred to subsequently as Dora the Dotty.
- CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union; acronym usage standardised.
- Forrestal: rendered as James Forrestal; US Secretary of Defence.
- hopak: Ukrainian folk dance; used without glossing as a known cultural reference.
- Maksim Aleksanych: new proper name introduced; form retained.
- Nabokov, *Lolita*: retained as cultural references without alteration.
-
- Vasily Stalin, Yakov: new proper names introduced.
- Sarah and Diana Churchill: new proper names introduced.
- SRI-13: standardised rendering for НИИ-13 (Научно-исследовательский институт).
- Institute of Higher Sociology: canonical form introduced for Институт высшей социологии.
- Institute of Black Professorship: unofficial nickname introduced for contrast with Red Professorship.
- Liechtenstein: canonical English spelling retained.
- *SRI-13*: reaffirmed acronym for НИИ-13
- *The Tree of Evil*: course title and central metaphor introduced
- *The Red Gospel*: informal term for attendees’ lecture notes
- *General-Professor Dobronravov*, *General of Psychopathology Karpov*, *Professor Toptygin*, *General-Professor Bykov*: reaffirmed canonical forms
- *power complex*, *sadism*, *sexual psychopathology*, *degeneration*: treated as analytical terms, not editorialised
- *pederast*: retained as per semantic fidelity and period usage
- Professor Bykov - character name introduced.
- Legion, legionisation, legionnaires - newly coined academic terms in context. [411]
- Dr Kinsey - retained as canonical form, American sexologist.
- Prince of This World - translated title, retained as theological and ideological motif.
- General-Professor Dobronravov - character introduction.

- Order of the Russian intelligentsia - ideological term, rendered as per source.
- Kierkegaard, André Gide - canonical forms, marked as philosopher and writer respectively.
- Degenerologist - coined role, specialist in degeneration (cf. venereologist).
- Existentialism - marked in-text as legionnaire philosophy.
- General-Professor Kuroschupov - character introduced.
- Institute of the Black Professorship - ideological institution name retained from source.
- Dialectical Christianity - term introduced as a course title and theological framework.
- Prince of This World - recurring motif, reaffirmed.
- Red Gospel - term used by students for secret lecture notes.
- NII-13 - Scientific Research Institute No. 13, acronym retained.
- Raúl Castro - rendered per canonical spelling.
- Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli - character, fixed rendering.
- Hero/Semi-hero of Perekop - retained ideological designation.
- “Blue Star” case - untranslated as per style, capitalised as a case name.
- Charskaya - canonical transliteration of Lydia Charskaya.
- NKVD General - term retained as per glossary.
- osculum infame - theological Latin retained, explained in-line.
- The Red Pope - retained as proper name with ideological significance.
- Maksim Rudnev / Boris Rudnev - final appearances, no change to canonical forms.
- Medal “For the Rescue of the Drowning” - rendered descriptively; no established English equivalent.
- Doubting Thomas - used to render “Фома Неверный” as character archetype.
- House under the golden cockerel - maintained.
- Soviet Doctor Faust - rhetorical label preserved for Rudnev.
- Chronicle epilogue - formula translated faithfully with archaic tone.

Postscript to the Second Edition
of the novel by G. P. Klimov "The Prince of This World"
Globus Publishers, San Francisco, 1980

THE POISONED KEYS
Postscript by Professor of Social Psychology
Dr B. V. Sakharov, Woodhaven University

But God knows that in the day ye eat thereof,
then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,
knowing good and evil.

Genesis 3:5

Although *The Prince of This World* takes the form of an engaging novel, it touches upon such profoundly serious problems that it calls for detailed commentary. Like a hardback cover that protects the book itself, this work naturally demands not only a comprehensive preface, but also a postscript.

Since Klimov once worked in the American psychological warfare system, his *Prince* is both a product and an analysis of that psychological warfare.

Day after day, the front pages of newspapers across the globe are filled with the results of what is called psychological warfare. Yet few understand what lies behind this vague term.

So what exactly is it? If bacteriological warfare is war conducted by means of bacteria and infectious diseases, then psychological warfare - in scientific terms - is war conducted by means of mental illnesses. In this context, legions of psychopaths play the role that microbes play in biological warfare. They are just as invisible to the uninitiated as bacteria.

How many are there? According to American statistics, for example, about 18.5% of the population of the United States require psychiatric treatment - that is, 37 million people. And if one approaches this problem from the other side, via sex, and takes Dr Kinsey's statistics - and if one trusts Freud - the number is even greater: 37%, that is 74 million people out of a total population of 200 million. That is quite a substantial legion. And such legions, to a greater or lesser extent, exist in every country - even in the newly formed African republics.

What role do these legions play? Do these legionnaires sit quietly in psychiatrists' waiting rooms? Or do they take sedatives? Or is it these very psychopaths who determine the fate of the world? Well, let us take a look.

In the Soviet Union, there once existed an Institute of Red Professors, where after the Revolution the necessary red cadres were trained. Now, according to serious sources, there is in Moscow an Institute of Higher Sociology, which by analogy is referred to as the Institute of Black Professors, where they engage in certain darker problems of sociology. To grasp these problems, let us enlist the help of such heavy artillery as Lev Tolstoy.

In his diary entry for 12 June 1900, Tolstoy writes:
'I am seriously convinced that the world is ruled by the utterly insane. The sane either refrain from participation or are incapable of it.'

In his diary of 27 June 1910, returning to the subject, Tolstoy again writes:
'The insane always achieve their aims more effectively than the healthy. This is because they are free from all moral restraints: no shame, no honesty, no conscience, not even fear.'

Is this a joke? Very well, let us take Hitler and Stalin as examples. After Hitler's death, it was widely written that he had been a mentally ill paranoiac, a maniac, a psychopath, and so forth. After Stalin's death, the same story arose again: it turns out he too was a paranoiac, a schizophrenic, a maniac, and so on. So what is going on here?

It turns out Tolstoy was right. Only, as a writer, he did not distinguish between the insane and the mentally ill, where for every genuine madman confined in an asylum there are dozens of intermediate types - the disturbed, the mentally ill - who live among us and whom we do not even notice. More than that - many of them do not even realise themselves what is wrong with them.

Many mental illnesses, such as megalomania or persecution mania, are in effect hypertrophies - that is, pathological enlargements - of perfectly ordinary human qualities. Simplified, imagine these mental illnesses stretching like rubber: from 1% to 100%. All of us possess, in some degree, a sense of self-importance and a sense of being persecuted - let us say, 2-3% as a rule. But when these feelings grow, let us say to 40-60%, then we arrive at transitional stages of megalomania and persecution mania, like those of Stalin or Hitler, with their cults of self-deification on the one hand, and their system of concentration camps on the other.

The whole trick is that these manias become clearly visible only when they reach 100%. Then the person becomes a harmless lunatic who claims to be Napoleon and is locked away in an asylum. But before reaching that point, intermediate types of maniacs, like Hitler and Stalin, have time to turn the entire world upside down.

So it is possible to draw a clear line between the insane and the mentally ill. That line is the lunatic asylum. But between the mentally ill and the healthy, there is no clear dividing line - it stretches, like rubber, from 1 to 100%.

Thus, these intermediate types of mentally ill people - those called disturbed, psychopaths, neurotics, and psychotics - form a kind of special class of people with vividly expressed, specific traits. The combinations here are more numerous than in a kaleidoscope. It is hard to label these people unequivocally as mentally ill. But nor are they entirely normal: they are oddballs and eccentrics, possessed by all sorts of complexes along the lines of Kinsey, Freud, and Dostoevsky. In contrast to ordinary people, Dostoevsky called them extraordinary people. And these are precisely the legionnaires spoken of in *The Prince*.

Let us return now to Tolstoy's prophecy that the world is governed by madmen. First, Tolstoy merely affirms what is said in the Bible and in the title of Klimov's book: *The Prince of This World*. Secondly, the best example of this was Tolstoy himself. Lenin called Tolstoy 'the mirror of our revolution', and the renowned psychiatrist Rossolimo, who treated both Lenin and Tolstoy, gave the following diagnosis of Tolstoy: 'A degenerative dual constitution: paranoiac and hysterical, with predominance of the former.' Is that not interesting?

Let us take Stalin and Hitler. So, the Soviet Union was ruled for nearly thirty years by the mentally ill Stalin, and Germany for twelve years by the mentally ill Hitler. And then, led by their mentally ill leaders, two great nations locked themselves in a deadly struggle that cost millions upon millions of human lives. An unfathomable toll of destruction, grief, blood, and tears. For what? Why?

Is this not a dark problem of sociology?

Some readers may entertain the naïve thought: 'Would it not have been simpler for the Russians and the Germans, instead of going to war, to catch such lunatics as Stalin and Hitler and lock them in appropriate cages?' But one cannot pose the question in such terms. Why not? Because that is precisely what Stalin and Hitler themselves were doing - in accordance with the first law of Marxist dialectics: the unity and struggle of opposites. You see, you are already caught in a sociological dead end. That is why such problems are called accursed.

To approach the problem of leadership academically, it would be useful to examine the rest of the great leaders who took part in the Second World War. Though in the West there is a fondness for stressing that, say, on Red Square one cannot go out and proclaim Stalin a fool, whereas in the West one can say whatever one likes about one's leaders, in this case it is best to be more cautious.

Take the next great figure, and from the newspapers you already know that his children have a history of severe mental illness.

And the Bible gives a precise diagnosis on the matter:
'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits… A good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit… Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.' (Matthew 7:15-20) [336]

If you continue down this path, you will soon feel like Little Red Riding Hood in a dark forest, with grey wolves in sheep's skins running about all around. This dark forest is what is called higher sociology. And one might even say that this field is more paradoxical and more classified than atomic research.

This sensitive complex is well known to scholars who have studied... Siberian shamans and African witch doctors. And in those studies, the same phenomena were found as in the cases of Stalin and Hitler: a specific combination of mental illnesses that give rise to this power complex - a pathological craving for power. And this complex is so powerful that when a shaman was deprived of his power, a genuine shaman would fall seriously ill, and sometimes even die. Something similar happened to Napoleon when he found himself on the island of Saint Helena.

It creates a paradox: the born leader is the most unsuitable person to hold power. And this very paradox is the cause of nearly all wars and revolutions in human history.

Consider, for example, how much was once written about the African terrorist sect Mau Mau. The bloody rituals of this sect contained much from African witchcraft - such filth, in fact, that the newspapers could not even describe it. Yet now, with the blessing of the British Crown, the former leader of the Mau Mau, Jomo Kenyatta, has become the democratic Prime

Minister of the new democratic Kenya. From the name combination Kenya - Kenyatta alone, one can already sense megalomania and the power complex. I trust that His Excellency, the Prime Minister, will not take offence.

The preface to *The Prince* states that this is a book unlike any other. I found this claim so remarkable that I decided to investigate whether it was true.

As for the theme of *The Prince*, it chiefly describes a kind of complex social illness, once referred to as the devil, now called degeneration, which the author names legionisation. Evidently, the author adheres to the old principle that the devil dislikes being called by name.

To verify this, I consulted the New York Public Library, considered one of the best in the world. In the subject catalogue under 'Degeneration', I found hundreds of index cards referencing the two main components of this complex: mental illness and sexual perversion. Further cards referred to the connection between genius and madness, between mental illness and crime, and so forth. Incidentally, I was struck by the fact that in America - the country with the highest crime rate in the world - the father of scientific criminology, Professor Lombroso, is virtually untranslated into English.

But the main point was that in this largest library in America, there was not a single book describing degeneration as a unified phenomenon. That is, mental illnesses were there, sexual perversions were there - but degeneration, consisting of these two components? Degeneration... was not! That is to say, the key was missing. And without that key, you will understand nothing in this field. Thus it turns out that *The Prince* truly is a book unlike any other.

Incidentally, for several years now, Nobel Prizes have been awarded to scientists for 'research in the field of hereditary properties of the primary cell'. What are these scientists seeking? Apparently, that very mystery of degeneration, which leads back to heredity. For the time being, it seems they have reached the hereditary traits of some mosses and fungi.

The theme of *The Prince* is highly contentious. And it has been contentious ever since the human race has existed. Mainly because most legionnaires are inclined to dispute everything in order to prove the opposite. This is why, even in the Bible, the devil is called a liar and the father of lies - who always attempts to prove that he does not exist, that he is Nobody and Nothing.

So take this sound advice: never argue on this topic with your acquaintances. Otherwise you will understand why the legion is called a legion. Better to sit quietly, listen to the obvious lies, and take mental notes. That way, you will identify all the legionnaires, candidates, fellow travellers, and sympathisers. Then, as though through a magic crystal, you will discern truth and falsehood, the righteous and the sinners.

The most disputed part of *The Prince* will be the Great Purge, when the revolutionary and legionnaire Stalin exterminated his own kind. Incidentally, this is why philosophers say that the devil has a tendency towards self-destruction.

Very well, let us examine whether this is indeed the case. Speaking of the Great Purge, I again enlist such heavy artillery as Dostoevsky, who wrote the following about revolutionaries in his *Demons*:

'These demons... all the sores, all the miasmas, all the filth... that have accumulated in our great and dear sick man, in our Russia... and we shall hurl ourselves, mad and deranged, from the cliff into the sea, and we shall all drown, and to the depths with us... But the sick man will be healed and "will sit at the feet of Jesus"... and all will gaze in amazement...'

Dostoevsky is regarded as a prophet. Well then - he was describing the Great Purge. And this was no blind prophecy. He simply understood the sociological cycles that repeat themselves after every revolution.

In relation to *The Prince*, I set myself a very concrete task: to determine to what extent this novel does or does not correspond to historical reality.

Here, it is interesting to draw a parallel with the book by Joseph Novak *Our Cause Is Just, Comrade!* (Doubleday, New York, 1960). Novak had been a member of the Communist Party of one of the Soviet satellite states, later defected to the West, and wrote his memoirs about life in the Soviet Union. In Moscow, the author once had a conversation with an elderly Soviet psychiatrist. When the topic of the low number of mentally ill people in the Soviet Union arose, the doctor, a well-known specialist in the field, said the following: [333, 358, 682]

According to them, the known mental illnesses disappeared in our country after the Revolution... But reality is different. First of all, in the initial post-revolutionary period, the mentally ill... were shot as unreliable elements or sent to camps for forced labour... If you look closely at our psychiatric clinics now, you will be struck by the absence of certain typical mental disorders, which are frequently encountered in clinics in the United States, England, Sweden, and other countries. I mean certain types of neurasthenia, some forms of schizophrenia, and various sexual perversions - in other words, those types of mental illnesses that can remain hidden in everyday life... A large number of people who abroad would be sent to mental hospitals are here... sent to forced labour, and very often dispatched to the far North for hard labour that supposedly turns them into useful members of society... But behind these statistical data, which proudly emphasise the minimal percentage of mentally ill people in the Soviet Union, lies the tragedy of thousands of patients suffering for acts committed unconsciously.'

These are precisely the legionnaires described in *The Prince*. So, although it is a novel, it is based on entirely real events.

Speaking of the Great Purge, the following should be noted. The decision on this purge was taken at a session of Stalin's Politburo on 13 May 1935, where it was resolved to 'purge' approximately 5% of the population of the USSR. What were the results?

From the Communist Party itself, which had 2,800,000 members, 1,220,000 were repressed - that is, 44%. And from the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), out of 71 members, 55 were eliminated - that is, 78%. The same story applied to all the governing bodies of the party and the state, including the leadership of the Red Army. The final wave of the purge swept through the very purification machine itself - the NKVD - including its chief, Yezhov. Thus, although the purge affected everyone (5%), it

affected the Communist Party most (44%), and its governing structures even more (78%). Thus the revolution devoured its own children.

Like Cain and Abel, one of the first victims of this purge was Abel Yenukidze, a comrade of Stalin's from revolutionary work in the Caucasus. And in *Pravda* on 13 June 1935, an article by Khrushchev appeared, calling Yenukidze a 'political and moral degenerate'. When, after Stalin's death, Beria - the former head of the secret police - was eliminated, the Soviet press again included the same strange accusation: 'bourgeois degenerate'. [360, 684]

In the book *Man on Trial* by the American lawyer Gerald Dickler, thirteen historical trials are described, including the first Moscow Trial, which had 33 defendants. What is this strange concentration of the number 13? From entirely different sides: Soviet and American alike. Might this devil's dozen truly bring misfortune? [361, 685, 686]

A partial answer is offered by Dr Kinsey's statistics, which state the following: 'Every 13th American between the ages of 16 and 55 was, for at least three years of their adult life, a practising homosexual.' Later, many of these people marry, have children - and you will notice nothing. Nor will you notice the aforementioned 'types of mental illness that can remain hidden in everyday life'. What you will observe are only the 'acts committed unconsciously'.

All this is well known to the specialists, who deliberately slip in this symbolic number - 13 - where necessary.

Revolution is a pathological social process, and, like a festering boil, it attracts all the diseased elements of society. This is why, after every revolution, inevitable purges follow, in which, as a rule, the credulous destroy one another. But in the process, regrettably, many entirely innocent people perish.

Of course, it must be emphasised that in addition to the 13th Department, the NKVD had other departments, which also participated in the purge and operated according to different principles. This was already mentioned in the preface and in the text of the novel, which states that the other departments 'worked in the old-fashioned way'. But I wish to repeat this a third time, because it is precisely on this point that the devil's advocates will most strive to prove the contrary.

Therefore, let us linger on this matter in more detail. Let us begin at the beginning: how many departments did the NKVD-MVD have? In his book *The Secret World*, Pyotr Deryabin, a former lieutenant colonel in the MVD who defected to the West, gives a detailed description of the MVD's organisation, listing twelve departments. Yet Klimov describes a 13th Department so secret that it does not officially exist. I must say, the coincidence is astonishing! Some say that certain writers possess the gift of foresight.

Now let us turn to specialists in another field. In the book *The Homosexual in America* by Donald Cory, it is stated that 'after the Russian Revolution, laws against homosexuals were abolished'. Incidentally, earlier Cory notes that throughout the entire history of Christian civilisation, laws against homosexuals were first abolished as a result of the Great French Revolution. Hm. What is this peculiar connection between revolutions and pederasts? [364, 365, 688, 689]

Then Cory writes that in March 1934, Kalinin signed a decree that once again reinstated homosexuality as a social crime**.** 1934. And in 1936 the Great Purge began. Cory himself notes the coincidence, writing: *"This is a highly significant date, as it was the period of intensified struggle against the Old Bolsheviks... Since that time, there have been several reports that homosexuals were involved in anti-Stalin conspiracies."*

The same source quotes Wilhelm Reich's *The Sexual Revolution*, in which it is written about the Great Purge: *"The mass arrests of homosexuals caused panic... It is said there were numerous suicides in the Army."* [366, 367, 383, 690, 691, 707]

Thus, the portion of the Great Purge described in *The Prince* fully corresponds to historical reality.

But the devil's advocates will immediately raise a clamour and begin to object: "Look at Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin. They were all married. How could they be pederasts?"
- Mm-hmm, they will say in the 13th Department. Quite right. But, you see, Dr Kinsey's statistics indicate that among the American population - that is, within civilised society - for every 4% of practising homosexuals, there are 33% of various intermediate types who engaged in such acts for five years, three years, one year, once, or even only dreamed of it in their sleep - but right up to orgasm. This is called latent or repressed homosexuality. And the "apostle" Freud says that it is precisely in this 33% group that mental illnesses manifest more strongly and more frequently than in the first 4%. That's where the problem lies.

- By the way, they will say in the 13th Department, this was well known even to the biblical apostles. For example, the Apostle Matthew (12:43-45) says the following: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out... Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first."

Thus, from the perspective of the 13th Department and its demon-hunting - that is, mental illnesses - the 4% of fully open homosexuals are a far less dangerous element than the 33% they conceal: partial homosexuals, who constitute a sort of pool of candidates, fellow travellers, and sympathisers of this legion.

That is why philosophers say the devil has countless alibis and pseudonyms, and that he is not dangerous when he appears and frightens us, but when we do not see him.

It is precisely this disguised category to which comrades Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin belonged. To them one could also add Marx and Hitler.

Yes, at first glance all these men were married. But if you look more closely, you will immediately see that these were "marriages of convenience", a kind of fictitious marriage. One merely needs to find a suitable woman. And of those, there is a legion too. That is the whole trick.

And if you examine the products of "these marriages", the picture becomes even clearer. Lenin and Hitler's marriages were childless. And in the families and offspring of Marx, Trotsky, and Stalin, there is a whole string of suicides and severe mental illnesses. That is why the Bible says: *by their fruits ye shall know them.*

Take, for instance, the suicide of Hitler and his newlywed wife. Twilight of the gods. Hitler simply killed his bride so that she would not, later on, sell the memoirs of the Führer's intimate life to the Americans for a million dollars - something the Führer greatly wished to avoid. [716]

Check the biographies of these men yourself. You will immediately see that all this is as plain as two and two make four.

But just try saying this aloud. And immediately, miracles will begin: 33% of Americans - that is, 66 million people - will rise to the defence of Stalin and Hitler and begin to dispute it all. First and foremost, they will dispute Dr Kinsey's statistics, in which they themselves placed the crosses in anonymous questionnaires, and Dr Kinsey merely counted those crosses. The results astounded the whole world - and Dr Kinsey himself. But these statistics are the product of many years' work by an entire scientific research institute, and they are recognised not only in America, but also in Europe - and even in the Soviet Union.

And if you go even further down this path - the path pursued by certain cunning organs - and examine the intelligentsia under a microscope, these 33% (or 37% if the 4% of honest, open homosexuals are included) rise to 50%, and in the case of poets, writers, and literary types in general, to 75%.

This results in a paradox. On the one hand, a progressive legion of 37-50-75%. On the other hand, which of these legionnaires, beyond anonymous surveys, would wish to admit to a condition that such respected authorities as the Nobel laureate Thomas Mann consider worse than syphilis? Syphilis can be cured, but degeneration cannot. So it is entirely natural that nearly all legionnaires would seek to conceal it. That is why the Bible calls this thing: my name is Legion, for we are many - and he is a liar and the Father of Lies.

This same paradox, to a greater or lesser degree, will be found in every country - including the Russian émigré community. Including the circle of your own personal acquaintances.

Now you understand why *The Prince* became a forbidden fruit? And later will become an apple of discord.

But at the same time, The Prince helps to explain many things that seemed inexplicable. While reading this book, one might think that the tragic and sinister figure of Marshal of State Security of the USSR Maksim Rudnev, his mysterious 13th Department of the MVD, and the enigmatic Institute of Black Professors - are all merely elements of the novel. Yet, strange as it may seem, all this aligns astonishingly well with reality.

For instance, during the Soviet Premier Khrushchev's visit to New York on 9 September 1960, under pressure from Soviet security, American police suddenly engaged in a strange mass operation - quite unusual for American democracy. Newspapers reported that the police, without any stated reason, began taking highly decisive measures against places where beatniks, homosexuals, and other extraordinary types, "like those in Dostoevsky", gathered. In response came indignant cries: "What is this - Russia?!" With that question, the protestors themselves connected this action with Khrushchev's visit. They knew what was going on. And the Soviet secret police, in charge of Khrushchev's security, knew it just as well. [714]

To understand this inexplicable action, one need only read the newspapers carefully for accounts of the biography and psychology of President Kennedy's assassin - Lee Oswald - and of his counter-assassin, Jack Ruby. Like almost all terrorists, both were typical representatives of that same complex legion which was being dispersed during Khrushchev's visit to New York.

If one examines certain statements made by Soviet leaders, one is left with the impression that behind them indeed sits some kind of secret adviser who understands this legion very well.

Khrushchev's behaviour at the artists' exhibition in the Moscow Manezh in early 1964 was particularly telling in this regard. While inspecting the works of modernist painters, the Soviet Premier addressed them with the following words:

'Gentlemen, are you pederasts or normal people?... I'm telling you now, give me a list of those who want to go abroad. Tomorrow we'll issue you foreign passports - go!'

Modernist painter Zhutovsky approached. Again, the Premier questioned him: [369, 393, 693, 717]

'Are you a pederast or a normal man? Want to go abroad - go. We'll take you as far as the border free of charge... We're not going to spend a single kopeck on this dog's muck.'

In front of Zhutovsky's self-portraits, the Premier remarked:

'The painting is grotesque, but the spiritual affinity between the subject and the self-portrait is obvious.'

'But these are experiments,' Zhutovsky replied.

'Looking at these experiments,' said the Premier, 'I have every reason to think you're pederasts - and here that carries a ten-year sentence. You're out of your minds and trying to knock us off the right path. No, gentlemen - we're declaring war on you!'

This is not an anecdote but a verbatim stenographic transcript made by Western correspondents. One must admit that Khrushchev had a very, very keen understanding of modernist art.

Through Khrushchev's mouth, the Soviet government formally declared war on the legion - a war that Marshal of State Security Rudnev had long been conducting. The Soviet Premier publicly pleaded with legionnaires to leave the country - but this is precisely the quantum weapon Marshal Rudnev systematically bombards the West with: beginning with the androgynous "maybe-girls" of the MVD, whom they foist on Western journalists and diplomats, and ending with writers from the madhouse, whom they deport to the West.

When The Prince is compared with the facts above - and there are many such facts - the result is one of two things: either the Soviet leaders are following in the footsteps of The Prince, or The Prince is following in the footsteps of the Soviet leaders. Or else both are walking the same path of historical and scientific reality. Either way, it must be acknowledged that The Prince is a rather documentary novel.

Now let us return to the main theme of The Prince - the Great Purge - and consider what Western authors have written on the subject. Take the novel by Victor Serge, The Case of Comrade Tulayev, which reviewer Bertram Wolfe described in The New York Times as 'apparently the greatest novel about the Russian purges.' [339, 371, 394, 395, 694, 695, 719]

In this novel, Serge treats the Great Purge as merely some sort of misunderstanding, in which revolutionaries simply made a small mistake. And Serge does not write a single word of what is discussed in *The Prince*.

Very well, let us look at Serge himself. He was not only a professional revolutionary, but a hereditary one. Serge is merely a pseudonym. His real name was Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich - a relative of the same regicide Kibaltchich who was executed for attempting to assassinate Alexander II. Serge first did time in French prisons - for membership in anarchist and terrorist groups. Then, from a French internment camp, he was transferred to the USSR in an exchange. There he was a minor Soviet official in the Comintern, but soon found himself in a Soviet concentration camp, from which he was expelled back to France.

All of Serge-Kibaltchich's relatives who remained in the USSR were arrested during the Great Purge - every last one. His wife's relatives were also imprisoned. His wife survived only because she went mad in time.

And after all that, when describing the Great Purge, Serge claims to know nothing. Had he not read Dostoevsky's *Demons*? It was just a little mistake, apparently.

And what of Bertram Wolfe, who considers The Case of Comrade Tulayev 'the greatest book about the Russian purges'? Might this Bert be illiterate? Not at all - Bertram Wolfe headed the Department of Ideological Advisers in the US State Department and at the Voice of America. He lectured on communism at America's top universities and even received an honorary doctorate.

In short, Bert was one of the best Amerikikansky experts on Soviet affairs. A typical trait of this specific category is that most of them were once communists, Trotskyists, or at least fellow travellers in their youth, and they only became disillusioned with their ideals after the Great Purge. The result is that American lambs are warned of the Red menace by former Reds - wolves in sheep's clothing - who leave much unsaid.

Lately, Bertram Wolfe had been working at the Hoover Institute for the Study of War, Revolution, and Peace at Stanford University, where he published the book Strange Communists I Have Known. The title alone reveals that the communist ranks included a fair share of "strange" types. Yet about the Great Purge - in which precisely these "strange" types were purged - Professor Wolfe professes to know absolutely nothing. [399, 723]

Let us turn to another book about the Great Purge: Darkness at Noon, regarded as Arthur Koestler's best novel. And again, we find the same story: at the high noon of communism, some kind of terrible eclipse occurs, and the protagonist, Nikolai Salmanovich - a very sympathetic character - is mistakenly sent to the next world. [338, 372, 396, 696, 697, 720]

Now let us look at the author. Koestler was a member of the Communist Party from 1931 to 1938 - that is, he became disillusioned with communism immediately after the Great Purge. In his earlier novel The Gladiators, which describes the Spartacus uprising (a favourite origin

myth for communists), Koestler touches lightly on pederasty. Because of this, The Gladiators ended up in a specialised bibliographic reference: Homosexuals in Literature, a chronological bibliography from 700 BC to the present day. So, Koestler knows what happened before the birth of Christ - but knows nothing of what happened in our own time? [400, 724]

And finally, let us consider the most recent book on the Great Purge: *The Great Terror*, written by the English poet and political writer Robert Conquest. Although the book has thirteen chapters and 633 pages, nothing of what is said in *The Prince* is mentioned therein. [374, 397, 698, 721]

Conquest, across thirteen chapters, calculates that thirteen million people were destroyed during the Great Purge. Hm - again this mystical thirteen!? Of these, according to Conquest, one million were shot and twelve million perished in concentration camps. Why? - No explanation. Just a phenomenon. A mystery.

The reviewer of this book in The New York Times was George Kennan, former American ambassador to the USSR and professor of history at Princeton University - at the Institute for Advanced Study, where Albert Einstein once taught. The level could hardly be higher. And yet even Professor Kennan adds nothing to the enigma of the Great Purge. A phenomenon, full stop. Incidentally, Kennan's great-uncle, George Kennan Sr, engaged in revolutionary propaganda among Russian prisoners of war in Japan in 1906 - funded by Amerikikan bankers. And his great-nephew claims to know absolutely nothing about revolutionaries. [375, 401, 402, 699, 700, 729]

You see, a whole host of experts on Soviet affairs have written about the Great Purge - and the mystery remains a mystery. Some kind of mistake, an eclipse, a phenomenon. And the mystical thirteen million? That is why Klimov's The Prince is indeed a book unlike any other.

In his introduction to The Prince, Professor Novikov touches on the problem of the "Lenin complex", which underpinned the Harvard Project - a psychological warfare programme apparently aimed at provoking a new revolution in the USSR. Let us take a closer look at this mysterious "Lenin complex".

It was discussed in the journal *Der Monat*, the official publication of the American military administration in Germany, intended for re-educating Germans in the spirit of democracy. [342]

In the article "Letter from Oxford" (Der Monat, August 1957), the journal's editor-in-chief, Melvin Lasky, described a five-day conference held at Oxford University in England, gathering specialists on the liberation of Russia from Bolshevism. At the highest level. In it, Lasky mentions the Harvard Project - a vast study of Bolshevism led by Nathan Leites, which proceeded on the psychoanalytic assumption that the "Lenin complex" was, in essence, a complex of latent homosexuality. This information was even reprinted in Novoe Russkoe Slovo. [378, 404, 728]

A question arises involuntarily: is it really possible the Soviet intelligence services did not read this? And did not understand what it meant? But for professionals, these things are so elementary that without doubt Soviet intelligence knew it all - and far earlier. After all, you can find it in any decent textbook on psychology or sociology.

Thus, with regard to the Great Purge, *The Prince* fully corresponds to the psychoanalytic conclusions of Harvard professor Leites.

But this matter is rather delicate. For instance, another unavoidable question arises: whom exactly were the Harvard professors identifying through Rorschach tests, in preparation for another "liberation" of Russia? Was it not those very same legionnaires who were purged during the Great Purge?

And immediately yet another impertinent question arises: why was the leadership of this psychological war entrusted chiefly to Americans who had been expelled from the State Department as politically unreliable? Remember the McCarthy era?

But for that, you need to know what McCarthyism was. If you look again at Cory's *The Homosexual in America*, previously cited in relation to the Great Purge, you will see that McCarthyism was the American version of exactly what happened in the USSR during the Great Purge. And remember how the American press then screamed about a "witch hunt"? At the very moment when hundreds of homosexuals were being purged from the State Department. [732]

And do you recall the fantastical conspiracies of Kremlin poison-doctors during the Great Purge and shortly before Stalin's death? Fantasy? Yet in the American press, one can find any number of serious claims that Senator McCarthy himself was *neutralised*. In that same government hospital which, in America, serves as the equivalent of the Kremlin Clinic. It would seem that here too, the mice ate the cat. Nothing is new under the sun, as Marshal of State Security Rudnev liked to say.

And if you pursue this line of inquiry further, you will find yourself in such thickets, such jungles, that... it's better not to go there. You will see things that cannot be spoken of. That is precisely why *The Prince* became a forbidden fruit.

If you imagine human society in the form of a social pyramid, legionisation increases as you ascend the pyramid. In a well-ordered, cultured society, where there have been no recent social upheavals or revolutions - where the pyramid has not been overturned, as during the Soviet Revolution - in such a stable society, the legionnaires will settle themselves upon the steps of the pyramid roughly as follows: at the bottom, among workers and peasants, there will theoretically be 1% legionnaires, and at the top, theoretically, 100%.

Now recall Kinsey's 37%, which, in the case of the intelligentsia, rises to 50%, and in the case of poets, writers, and other masters of the human soul - to 75%. It is precisely for this reason that the existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard observed pessimistically that, in our time, the devil has taken up residence in printing ink.

At a certain level of this social pyramid - the level of the intelligentsia and the press - such legionnaires will already make up more than 50%. And in a democratic society, they will outvote you democratically. This is the same biblical prince - only dressed as a democrat. But he is seen only by the initiated.

Would you like a visual illustration? Reach into your pocket. Take out a one-dollar bill. On the reverse side you will see this very same social pyramid. Count how many steps there are. You will find there are thirteen. And at the top - an eye. This is the eye of knowledge.

And on the other side - the eagle. In one talon, thirteen arrows. In the other, thirteen leaves. Above the head - thirteen five-pointed stars and a motto of thirteen letters. And below, the explanation that this is not some trifle, but the official Great Seal of the United States of America. [409, 733]

What is this obsession with the devil's dozen? Some will say it represents the thirteen founding states. Others will say it is the seal of that very biblical prince who, in America, became a democratic architect and is building that very same social pyramid.

If you examine the Statue of Liberty in the same spirit, you will find that it was a gift to the USA from certain French secret societies - the same esoteric philosophical societies which some call humanist, and others satanist. And immediately, a dialectical question arises: what is the connection between humanism and satanism? Or what is the relationship between liberty and Satan? And what is the mystery behind it? [379, 410, 703, 734]

If you can answer those esoteric questions, you will receive a "three" in higher sociology. I, though a professor, know it only to a "four". And a "five" - only the Lord God Himself knows.

With this knowledge, you will begin to understand certain incomprehensible things happening behind the back of the Statue of Liberty. Unbelievable crime rates - and a Supreme Court that systematically defends the rights not of citizens, but of criminals. What... And all the while, endless chatter about a "sick society". But what is the name of this illness? - Such naïve questions are not to be asked in polite society.

But enough of higher sociology. Otherwise your head may start to spin, and you might feel slightly queasy. Since *The Prince* is first and foremost a novel, let us speak rather of literature.

At present, modernism is in vogue in Western literature, and in the Soviet Union - socialist realism. From this point of view, The Prince represents a kind of "social modernism". Yes, a genuine social modernism, since it uses the methods of socialist realism to portray things that the modernists - once known in pre-revolutionary Russia as mere decadents - dare not say outright. Nothing is new under the sun. [735]

Among Western modernists, the fashion now is for anti-novels and anti-heroes - characters who, more often than not, turn out to be legionnaires. From that perspective, The Prince is an anti-anti-novel.

Modernists delight in neologisms, inventing all manner of new words. The Prince has its share as well. Once there were "lishentsy" (those deprived of rights) and "vydvizhentsy" (up-and-comers); now we have "degenerentsy" and "izvrashchentsy" (degenerates and perverts). Once we had "militsionery" (militiamen), now - "legionery". Where once there were venereologists, now - "degenerologists". Are these not neologisms? Ah yes - nearly forgot: once there was collectivisation, now there is legionisation. A clear neologism.

Modernists - including rebellious Soviet writers - like to use a kind of secret code, or tainopis. The essence of this tainopis is as follows: written by legionnaires, about legionnaires, and for legionnaires. The legionnaires will read it and immediately understand. The ordinary person will not notice a thing. [736]

The Prince does not lag behind the modernists. It too contains tainopis. For example, recall the scenes in which the Soviet Dr Faust - Maksim Rudnev - during the Great Purge, curses witches and warlocks with the most obscene, filthy, and seemingly meaningless insults. Remember?

You read it - and understood nothing. But the legionnaires immediately recognise the code. Are these curses truly meaningless? Or do they possess their own logic? What is the semantics here?

Normal people generally know none of this - even if they've graduated from three universities. But the legionnaires know it instinctively, without any university training. That is why the Russian word for witch - ved'ma - and vedun (seer) comes from the Old Russian vedat', meaning to know - to know what others do not. And the English word witch comes from the same Old English semantic root - wit, meaning to know. To know what others do not. Nothing is new under the sun. Semantics. There is even a branch of philosophy - semantic philosophy - that seeks truth by precisely such means.

From the point of view of higher sociology, the matter is of course not in obscene language per se, but in the mental illnesses that so often lurk behind it. Especially sadism and masochism, which are difficult to detect and are among the most common components in the psychodynamics of the true revolutionary.

There stands the masochist on the street corner, preaching with a beatific smile about love, equality, and brotherhood - while inside, Freud's complexes of self-destruction and death-drive are boiling. Strike him on the head with a stick, and he enjoys it. Meanwhile, his partner - the sadist - runs around with bombs and pistols. Later, they meet at a safehouse, where the real secrecy lies not in politics, but in the gratification of their base instincts.

And after the revolution, the sadist joins the Cheka, takes up the same pistol, and executes his masochist comrade who cannot stop stirring up the people. With a loving hand, the sadist shoots the masochist in the mouth - because, according to Freud, they share oral eroticism, and the pistol for them is a phallic symbol. There you have it - the classic revolutionary novel. Modernist and fully Freudian.

That is why Commissar of State Security Rudnev swore with such filth at the permanent revolutionaries. That is why the Harvard professors peered beneath Comrade Lenin's tail - through the lens of latent homosexuality.

By the way, there is reason to believe that while the Harvard professors were peering beneath Lenin's tail and scrutinising Russian émigrés for new Lenins and Trotskys, Soviet intelligence was not idle either - and was peering under the Harvard professors' tails, from the very same angle. But… let us not get distracted. We are not detectives here, merely humble men of letters. Let us return to literature.

The Prince contains much more tainopis. For example, what is this "elixir of life" that is worse than pickled vipers and dried cockroaches? But no - I shall refrain from explaining what it is. Better to ask around among your acquaintances.

Since The Prince is true social modernism, it contains whole golden seams of tainopis. For example: who are these Martians? What are these mixed marriages with Martians? Who is this half-princess Zinaida Genrikhovna? Or her brother - the half-hero of Perekop?

Apparently, the Martians are just a secret cipher for the 13th Department of the MVD. Try decoding it yourself. Or ask your acquaintances. But be careful - some might not take kindly to the question. And the uproar will be as if you had trodden not just on Satan's tail, but on the Antichrist's as well.

Thus, after the publication of The Berlin Kremlin, the international press proclaimed Klimov a prophet. But one should recall that true prophets often preached in the wilderness. Remember - the voice of one crying in the wilderness? So it is with Klimov and his Prince: when he turned to genuine prophecy, he found himself in a wilderness. Ah yes - nothing is new under the sun.

People fear the prophetic word - and around the prophet there forms a wilderness. Such a wilderness is the mark of a true prophet. And those prophets who began in such a wilderness usually turn out, in the end, to have been right.

But what is so frightening in *The Prince*? Very well, let us consider it from the standpoint of dialectical Christianity.

The smartest book in the world is said to be the Bible. And the most profound book within the Bible is considered to be the Apocalypse, or the Revelation of St John the Theologian. In this Apocalypse, it is stated twice that one third of all people will be destroyed for their sins (Chapter 9:15 and 9:18).

Why precisely one third? Let us check. Authoritative sources state that the Soviet Revolution, in total, over the course of 50 years of Soviet rule, cost Russia 50 million human lives. And the population of Russia before the Revolution was around 150 million. What, then, was the price of revolution? Precisely one third.

Perhaps this is mere coincidence? Very well. But what about Dr Kinsey's 37%? That too is one third. The biblical prophets simply knew that when a country's saturation coefficient of legionnaires reaches one third, the society becomes sick - and then disaster looms.

That is why America, the richest country in the world, is trembling with fever. Student and black riots - a coalition of rotting intelligentsia and the social underclass. Beatniks and hippies - nihilists and anarchists. A flood of drugs. Unbelievable levels of crime. An astounding prevalence of mental illness - 18.5%. A sexual revolution of suckers and lickers. All these are characteristic symptoms. And then comes the red plague, or the brown plague, or the black or yellow - and the harvest begins. Then, when the results are tallied, the apocalyptic "one third" reappears, the portion from which nature, in one way or another, seeks to purge itself.

And how should one decode the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah - cities so saturated with sodomitic sins, that is, with sodomy, that is, with homosexuality - that they were destroyed by fire from heaven? On this point, both the Old Testament and the New Testament are in perfect agreement. And these are precisely the progressive 37-75% of Dr Kinsey.

Russia has already passed through this terrifying phase of the cyclical renewal of human society. But for America and the West, this ordeal still lies ahead. If you like, this is the true meaning of the prophecy by the Apostle Karl Marx regarding the inevitable succession of

social formations. He merely rephrased the biblical apostles. See how simple it all is - if one possesses the biblical keys to understanding.

And herein lies the terrible, apocalyptic tainopis of The Prince - which frightened not only our émigré press, but also the entire Western press. In this, I must agree with what my colleague Professor Novikov wrote in the preface. For, if one is to believe those clever agencies engaged in psychological warfare, then among the press - filled with legionnaires, fellow-travellers, and sympathisers suffering from problems in the realms of Kinsey, Freud, and Dostoevsky - the proportion is no longer 37%, nor even 50%, but fully 75%. And in a civilised society, that becomes the ruling party. That is why The Prince found itself classed as anti-party literature. Do you see now how the devil of degeneration hides his secrets?

Only by understanding this can one grasp why the noted philosopher Denis de Rougemont, in his book *The Devil's Share*, remarks with pessimism that the truth about the devil is such a filthy thing that a single drop of it clouds life like a drop of water in a glass of absinthe. Yet from this truth, one may become intoxicated. Some, indeed, may even feel nauseated.

If anyone accuses me of repetition, I do so deliberately. Repetition is the mother of learning. After all, we are not reading little novels here, but speaking of the most difficult science in the world - higher sociology, of God and the devil, of Christ and the Antichrist, of the origins of good and evil, of happiness and unhappiness, of life and death - where, in all these things, the key role is played by that curse upon the human race which from time immemorial has been called the devil, and which to this day people fear to name aloud. But Klimov named it - and you see what happened. That is why some call this science “devilish sociology”. Hence I repeat certain crucial points - not only so that the reader may understand them, but so that he may remember them.

But since God dwells in heaven and the devil on earth, let us return to more objective reality. Let us return to the initial evaluations of Klimov by the international press.

The well-known Kremlinologist Eugene Nathaniel Lyons wrote a book entitled Our Secret Allies - the Peoples of Russia. This book contains many quotations - but the most frequent citations are from Klimov’s The Berlin Kremlin. It turns out Klimov was the chief ally.

James O’Donnell, the European correspondent for one of America’s largest magazines, *The Saturday Evening Post*, spent a long time travelling through Germany, investigating the American psychological war effort against the Soviet Union. After this, he published in *The Post* (6 June 1953) a long and serious report entitled “These Russians on Our Side”.

But again, O’Donnell cites Klimov more than anyone else: “Grigory Klimov - a man with the ability to read the minds of others... The sharpest intellect among the semi-military émigrés... Klimov sat down and wrote The Berlin Kremlin, now a bestseller in Europe...” So again, among “These Russians on Our Side”, Klimov finds himself in first place.

At the end, O’Donnell exclaims with pathos: “Thus spoke Grigory Petrovich Klimov...” - faintly echoing Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Then O’Donnell concludes: “Yet what he said” - not Zarathustra, but Klimov - “I heard many, many, many times... It is hard to believe that they” - the Russians on our side - “were all so utterly mistaken.”

In summing up everything the international press has written about Klimov, I would like to conclude just as logically and simply as O'Donnell: it is hard to believe that the entire international press could have been so utterly mistaken.

Quite the contrary. Everything that was written about the author of The Berlin Kremlin applies with even greater force to the author of The Prince of This World. That is why I have reminded you of these reviews in such detail - for, in effect, they are reviews of The Prince, a book the like of which has not been seen before.

Although... all of it is already present in the Bible. It is the result of that invisible process through which nature seeks equilibrium in its dealings with man - a process that distributes spiritual and material goods among people, if not equally, then at least by turns.

Now and ever and unto the ages of ages... Amen!

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Endnotes

Endnotes are keyed to body paragraph numbers (marked as §). Paragraph numbers are counted from the start of the manuscript and exclude this Endnotes section.

1. Weg ohne Umkehr is correctly rendered as Road Without Return. - cue: Weg. [Reference: §15]

2. The Kremlin in Berlin is a literal rendering; alternate English titles may vary, but this version is retained for clarity. - cue: The Kremlin. [Reference: §459]

3. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

4. Our Country - rendered for Наша Страна, Argentine newspaper. - cue: Our Country. [Reference: §14]

5. Russian Life - rendering of Русская Жизнь, San Francisco-based émigré newspaper. - cue: Russian Life. [Reference: §35]

6. Nathan Leites - retained spelling per academic convention. - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

7. TsOPE - Central Union of Post-War Emigrants from the USSR (ЦОПЭ) - cue: Central Union. [Reference: not found]

8. Svoboda - Russian-language journal edited by Klimov - cue: Svoboda. [Reference: §20]

9. Antikommunist - German-language journal edited by Klimov - cue: Antikommunist. [Reference: §20]

10. Frederick Barghoorn - rendered per academic usage - cue: Frederick Barghoorn. [Reference: §25]

11. “Lenin Complex” - retained as conceptual term central to the text - cue: Lenin Complex. [Reference: §19]

12. Index Librorum Prohibitorum - Latin title of the Vatican’s Index of Prohibited Books, retained untranslated - cue: Index Librorum Prohibitorum. [Reference: §29]

13. “monkey business” - informal Americanism preserved in quotation - cue: monkey business. [Reference: §26]

14. Kim Philby - British intelligence officer and Soviet double agent, retained as known historical figure - cue: Kim Philby. [Reference: §27]

15. Jack Ruby - transliterated per English convention - cue: Jack Ruby. [Reference: §25]

16. Samizdat - preserved in transliteration as established term for clandestine literature - cue: Samizdat. [Reference: not found]

17. Doctor Faustus - rendered with reference to Thomas Mann’s novel - cue: Doctor Faustus. [Reference: §36]

18. Marilyn Monroe - kept as standard reference - cue: Marilyn Monroe. [Reference: §38]

19. The Prince - referring to Machiavelli’s work, retained in conventional form - cue: The Prince. [Reference: §37]

20. “Red cardinal” - Soviet political metaphor for hidden ideological operator, retained - cue: Red cardinal. [Reference: §40]

21. Malleus Maleficarum is rendered as Hammer of the Witches, the most accepted English translation. - cue: Malleus Maleficarum. [Reference: §309]

22. References to ‘Comrade Satan’ are preserved for tone, not literal translation. - cue: Comrade Satan. [Reference: §437]

23. Pope Innocent VIII’s bull of 1484 is historically accurate and referred to as such. - cue: Pope Innocent. [Reference: §428]

24. Pimy - Traditional soft boots worn by Samoyedic peoples, made from reindeer hide. - cue: Pimy. [Reference: not found]

25. Flagellum Daemonum Fascinariorum - Latin title translates roughly to “Scourge of Bewitching Demons”. - cue: Scourge of Bewitching Demons. [Reference: not found]

26. Sferatagemata Satanae - Latin title perhaps meant as “Satan’s Stratagems”. - cue: Satan. [Reference: §308]

27. Malleus Maleficarum - A historical witch-hunting manual, known in English as The Hammer of Witches. - cue: Malleus Maleficarum. [Reference: §309]

28. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

29. Thirteenth Department - 13-й отдел: translated consistently as Thirteenth Department. - cue: Thirteenth Department. [Reference: not found]

30. Order of Lenin - retained as is, highest Soviet honour. - cue: Order. [Reference: §23]

31. Commissar for State Security 3rd Class - Комиссар госбезопасности 3 ранга: equivalent to major general of the NKVD. - cue: Commissar. [Reference: §445]

32. Pimy - Samoyedic soft boots. - cue: Pimy. [Reference: not found]

33. Malleus Maleficarum - Hammer of Witches. - cue: Malleus Maleficarum. [Reference: §309]

34. Spectroscope - modern instrument retained as is. - cue: Spectroscope. [Reference: §293]

35. Blue folder - continued as established, the main repository of Maksim’s classified notes. - cue: Blue. [Reference: §23]

36. Metaphysical - used here in opposition to strictly sexual or psychological interpretations; conveys Klimov’s thematic emphasis. - cue: Metaphysical. [Reference: §736]

37. Bulla of Pope Innocent VIII - reference to the 1484 papal bull Summis desiderantes affectibus, authorising the persecution of witches. - cue: Bulla. [Reference: not found]

38. Devil’s dozen - a Russian expression akin to the “baker’s dozen”, but with ominous associations, meaning thirteen. - cue: s dozen - a Russian expression akin to the. [Reference: not found]

39. Doctor Faustus - allusion to the archetypal figure who trades his soul for knowledge and power, here a metaphor for Maksim’s identity as the Soviet “Faust”. - cue: s identity as the Soviet. [Reference: not found]

40. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

41. Bulla - retained untranslated for historical accuracy. - cue: Bulla. [Reference: not found]

42. Berezovka - transliterated as Berezovka. - cue: Berezovka. [Reference: §258]

43. Enemy of the people - consistently rendered from ‘враг народа’. - cue: враг народа. [Reference: not found]

44. Maksim - unchanged; standard form used throughout. - cue: Maksim. [Reference: §49]

45. 13th Department of the NKVD - consistently rendered; contextually distinct from the official 12. - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

46. [TN: “Ekh, little apple…” is a variant of a popular Russian folk song, often adapted for satirical or criminal verses.] - cue: Ekh, little apple…. [Reference: not found]

47. [TN: ‘nezalupa’ is a crude slang term referring to an unretracted foreskin; preserved here only for fidelity.] - cue: nezalupa. [Reference: §716]

48. [TN: ‘pals-turned-lovers’, euphemised here as ‘hybridising Satan and the Antichrist’, is Klimov’s symbolic shorthand for ideological, spiritual and genetic crossbreeding.] - cue: pals-turned-lovers. [Reference: not found]

49. [TN: The “infamous hyphenated word” remains unspecified. Klimov implies a censored slur or ideological label.] - cue: infamous hyphenated word. [Reference: not found]

50. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

51. Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli - NKVD General, former noblewoman, executioner - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli. [Reference: §610]

52. Hero of Perekop - Zinaida’s brother, impostor, former barber and actor - cue: Hero. [Reference: §36]

53. Cheka - Soviet secret police (predecessor to GPU, NKVD) - cue: Cheka. [Reference: §610]

54. Petrovsky Park - A park in Moscow - cue: Petrovsky Park. [Reference: §113]

55. Honorary Golden Weapon of the Revolutionary Military Council - decoration for military merit - cue: Honorary Golden Weapon. [Reference: §619]

56. George Sinclair - author of The Invisible World of Satan (1875) - cue: George Sinclair. [Reference: §671]

57. Thomas Weir and Jean Weir - historical figures referenced as analogues - cue: Thomas Weir. [Reference: §672]

58. Blue Star - secret religious-philosophical society, central to the chapter - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

59. Exhibit No. 127-D - item related to case against Zinaida Genrikhovna - cue: Exhibit No. [Reference: §659]

60. NKVD 13th Department - unit dealing with esoteric or ideological cases - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

61. Scarab - dung beetle used symbolically in Ancient Egyptian esotericism - cue: Scarab. [Reference: §663]

62. Vladimir Solovyov - Russian religious philosopher, associated with mystical theology - cue: Vladimir Solovyov. [Reference: not found]

63. Nikolai Berdyaev - Russian existentialist philosopher, central to the critique here - cue: Nikolai Berdyaev. [Reference: not found]

64. God-seekers - term for early 20th-century Russian religious philosophers - cue: God. [Reference: §29]

65. Blue Star - society; term now linked with satanic/god-seeker sects - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

66. Black Mass - ritual described involving parody of Christian liturgy - cue: Black Mass. [Reference: §696]

67. Gurdjieff - mystic known for esoteric spiritual teachings - cue: Gurdjieff. [Reference: §695]

68. 13th Department - NKVD unit investigating ideological, religious and esoteric offences - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

69. Ivan Strannik (senior) - Futurist poet under scrutiny in the file - cue: Ivan Strannik. [Reference: §77]

70. Dr Bykov - as presented in the novel (?) NKVD doctor cited for psychiatric evaluations - cue: Dr Bykov. [Reference: §715]

71. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - notorious thug, brother of Ivan Strannik - cue: Fedka. [Reference: §49]

72. Georges Geyer - Olga's father, Baltic German, associated with occultism - cue: Georges Geyer. [Reference: §723]

73. Dora Mazurkina - Olga's mother, Bolshevik and friend of Lenin's wife - cue: s mother, Bolshevik and friend of Lenin. [Reference: not found]

74. Third Eye - mystical faculty of perception used metaphorically - cue: Third Eye. [Reference: §722]

75. 'Made with a finger' - idiom for an artificially conceived or odd-looking child - cue: Made with a finger. [Reference: §731]

76. Georgy Lozgachev - adopted son of Lenin's sister Anna - cue: Georgy Lozgachev. [Reference: §733]

77. 'Infamous hyphenated word' - symbol of ideological taboo, left unnamed - cue: Infamous hyphenated word. [Reference: not found]

78. [TN: "Bricks, cubes, diamonds" refer to stylised Soviet military insignia, common slang in historical sources.] - cue: Bricks, cubes, diamonds. [Reference: not found]

79. [TN: The Gospel parable of the tares (weeds) appears in Matthew 13:24-30, interpreted here through Marxist-Leninist purging logic.] - cue: The Gospel. [Reference: §817]

80. [TN: “Red Cardinal” is a historical echo of Cardinal Richelieu, reframed here as Stalin’s theological enforcer.] - cue: Red Cardinal. [Reference: §40]

81. [TN: The term “unity and conflict of opposites” refers to a core principle of dialectical materialism.] - cue: unity and conflict of opposites. [Reference: §861]

82. [TN: Berdyaev’s phrase “Nothing, which nullifies” expresses metaphysical nihilism.] - cue: s phrase. [Reference: not found]

83. [TN: “Futurist” refers to the early 20th-century radical artistic movement, often politically affiliated.] - cue: Futurist. [Reference: §708]

84. [TN: The final quotation is a paraphrase of John 16:8-11, used to frame the cosmic verdict.] - cue: The. [Reference: §4]

85. [TN: “Legionisation” and “legionaries” are Klimov’s coded terms implying occult or biological infiltration.] - cue: Legionisation. [Reference: §927]

86. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

87. Comrade Satan - colloquial expression for the Devil, used by Maksim - cue: Comrade Satan. [Reference: §437]

88. Conveyor of death - euphemism for NKVD execution chambers - cue: Conveyor. [Reference: §462]

89. Legions - term used to suggest mass population or demonic hosts (cf. Biblical “Legion”) - cue: Legion. [Reference: §35]

90. Tares - metaphorical term used for political undesirables - cue: Tares. [Reference: §829]

91. Red Cardinal - Stalin’s private nickname for Maksim Rudnev - cue: Red Cardinal. [Reference: §40]

92. Furnace of fire - biblical allusion, here used as justification for purges - cue: Furnace. [Reference: §833]

93. Papa Innokenty - presumably a religious or ideological mentor figure, perhaps as presented in the novel - cue: Papa Innokenty. [Reference: §517]

94. Ivan Mort - pseudonym meaning “death” in Latin - cue: death. [Reference: §26]

95. Fedka Eye-Gouger - alias of Fedka the Cross-Eyed after self-mutilation - cue: Fedka Eye. [Reference: §846]

96. Permanent revolution - Trotskyist doctrine, reframed here as psychiatric diagnosis - cue: Permanent. [Reference: §537]

97. Tragic freedom - Berdyaev’s concept of destructive metaphysical liberty - cue: Tragic. [Reference: §26]

98. Blue Star - clandestine society under NKVD scrutiny - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

99. Zavalyukhin - literary critic linked by surname and ideology to ‘decay’ - cue: decay. [Reference: §1653]

100. Case of the Prince of This World - central metaphysical file in the novel - cue: Case. [Reference: §25]

101. Grey folder - recurring NKVD file format, here as presented in the novel's symbolism of secret judgement - cue: Grey. [Reference: §23]

102. Poisoned keys - recurring metaphor for forbidden knowledge - cue: Poisoned. [Reference: §102]

103. [TN: Petrashevsky Circle - a group of progressive intellectuals in 1840s Russia advocating utopian socialism; Dostoevsky was arrested with them in 1849.] - cue: Petrashevsky Circle. [Reference: §984]

104. [TN: storm petrel - traditional Russian metaphor for a prophetic or revolutionary figure, associated with Gorky.] - cue: Russian. [Reference: §13]

105. [TN: telemechanics - Klimov's term for NKVD torturers; a grotesque euphemism derived from "remote manipulation".] - cue: s term for NKVD torturers; a grotesque euphemism derived from. [Reference: not found]

106. [TN: Dzerzhinsky - founder of the Soviet secret police (Cheka), known for his role in the Red Terror.] - cue: Dzerzhinsky. [Reference: §920]

107. [TN: Piłsudski - Polish revolutionary and statesman, known for his early militant activism.] - cue: Polish. [Reference: §85]

108. [TN: Yezhovshchina - period of mass repressions under NKVD chief Nikolai Yezhov, 1936-1938.] - cue: Yezhovshchina. [Reference: §1063]

109. [TN: "Black Raven" - nickname for NKVD black lorries used in arrests.] - cue: Black Raven. [Reference: §1069]

110. [TN: "Sent up the chimney" - idiomatic euphemism for execution, linked here with cremation or disappearance.] - cue: Sent up the chimney. [Reference: not found]

111. [TN: "Bobka" - diminutive nickname for Boris, used informally by Maksim.] - cue: Bobka. [Reference: §51]

112. [TN: "Candidate and even sympathisers" - satirical echo of Soviet language used in political repression.] - cue: Candidate and even sympathisers. [Reference: not found]

113. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

114. Professor Rudnev - head of the NKVD's Scientific Research Institute - cue: Professor Rudnev. [Reference: §936]

115. 13th Department of the NKVD - secret department focused on ideological or psychiatric investigations - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

116. Professor Lombroso - Cesare Lombroso, criminologist - cue: Professor Lombroso. [Reference: §965]

117. Dr Nordau-Suedfeld - Max Nordau (pseudonym of Simon Maximilian Südfeld), author of Degeneration - cue: Dr Nordau. [Reference: §969]

118. Dr Freud - Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis - cue: Dr Freud. [Reference: §970]

119. Kierkegaard - Søren Kierkegaard, Danish existentialist philosopher - cue: Kierkegaard. [Reference: §973]

120. Rossolimo - Grigory Ivanovich Rossolimo, Russian psychiatrist - cue: Rossolimo. [Reference: §982]

121. Zinovy Sverdlov - adopted son of Maksim Gorky, brother of Yakov Sverdlov - cue: Zinovy Sverdlov. [Reference: §987]

122. Yakov Sverdlov - Soviet statesman, head of All-Russian Central Executive Committee - cue: Yakov Sverdlov. [Reference: §987]

123. NKVD Commission - internal security review body for case reassessment - cue: Commission. [Reference: §59]

124. Great Purge - Stalinist campaign of political repression (1936-1938) - cue: Great Purge. [Reference: §29]

125. Supreme Soviet - formal legislative authority in the USSR - cue: Supreme Soviet. [Reference: §1010]

126. Cheka - early Soviet secret police - cue: Cheka. [Reference: §610]

127. Telemechanics - euphemism for NKVD torturers - cue: Telemechanics. [Reference: §1019]

128. Dzerzhinsky - founder of Cheka, "naked sword of the revolution" - cue: naked sword of the revolution. [Reference: §920]

129. Piłsudski - Józef Piłsudski, Polish revolutionary leader - cue: Polish. [Reference: §85]

130. Rehabilitation through labour - Tolstoyan concept co-opted by Soviet penal ideology - cue: Rehabilitation. [Reference: §984]

131. Concentration camps - Soviet forced labour camps (Gulag) seen as inheriting Tolstoyan labour principles - cue: Concentration. [Reference: §383]

132. Yezhov - NKVD chief during peak of Great Purge - cue: Yezhov. [Reference: §540]

133. Black Raven - NKVD arrest vehicle - cue: Black Raven. [Reference: §1069]

134. Unity and struggle of opposites - Marxist dialectical law - cue: Unity. [Reference: §80]

135. "Sent up the chimney" - metaphor for state execution or erasure - cue: Sent up the chimney. [Reference: not found]

136. Bobka - affectionate diminutive for Boris - cue: Bobka. [Reference: §51]

137. The serpent and the sword - emblem of the NKVD's 13th Department - cue: The. [Reference: §4]

138. Red cardinal - ironic title for Maksim as Stalin's inquisitorial aide - cue: Red. [Reference: §15]

139. Hero of Socialist Labour - high civilian award in the USSR - cue: Hero. [Reference: §36]

140. Hero of the Soviet Union - the USSR's highest honour - cue: Hero. [Reference: §36]

141. Obscurantist - ideologically reactionary figure, as Klimov uses for Maksim - cue: Obscurantist. [Reference: §311]

142. Krasnaya Gorka - [TN: A traditional Russian spring festival often associated with weddings and folk rituals.] - cue: Krasnaya Gorka. [Reference: §1173]

143. Brockenberg Mountain - [TN: The Brocken, a peak in the Harz Mountains, long associated in European folklore with witches' gatherings on Walpurgis Night.] - cue: Brockenberg Mountain. [Reference: §1168]

144. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

145. Maksim: consistent transliteration of the NKVD Commissar. - cue: Maksim. [Reference: §49]

146. Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Bykov: NKVD Medical Service, professor of psychopathology. - cue: Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Bykov. [Reference: §1152]

147. Colonel Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov: NKVD Technical Service, professor of religious cult history. - cue: Colonel Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov. [Reference: §1152]

148. 13th Department (13-й отдел) of the NKVD: department specialising in ideological and occult matters. - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

149. Walpurgis Night: retained as standard term in European folklore. - cue: Walpurgis Night. [Reference: §1168]

150. Krasnaya Gorka: transliterated for cultural specificity, explained in note. - cue: Krasnaya Gorka. [Reference: §1173]

151. Gilles de Rais: historical figure; French nobleman, companion of Joan of Arc, later executed for heinous crimes - cue: Gilles. [Reference: §1182]

152. Tiffauges: Castle where de Rais committed his crimes - cue: Tiffauges. [Reference: §1185]

153. Place de la Madeleine: execution site in Nantes - cue: Place. [Reference: §41]

154. Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc): retained as 'Joan' consistently - cue: Arc): retained as. [Reference: not found]

155. Saint James and Saint Michael: names of saints to whom Gilles and Joan entrusted their souls - cue: Saint James. [Reference: §1196]

156. Madame Kollontai: Alexandra Kollontai, Bolshevik revolutionary, advocate of free love - cue: Madame Kollontai. [Reference: §1215]

157. Yelena Stasova: Lenin associate, Party secretary - cue: Yelena Stasova. [Reference: §1220]

158. Zemlyachka: Bolshevik, known for role in Crimean Red Terror - cue: Zemlyachka. [Reference: §1221]

159. Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria): Spanish Communist leader - cue: Dolores. [Reference: §1222]

160. Ana Pauker: Romanian Communist, known for internal purges - cue: Ana Pauker. [Reference: §1224]

161. Glauber’s salt: historical term for sodium sulphate used as a laxative - cue: Glauber. [Reference: §1227]

162. "Hawk" plane - A likely reference to the Polikarpov I-16 "Ishak" (Little Donkey), colloquially termed yastrebok (“Hawkling”) in Soviet wartime slang. - cue: Hawk. [Reference: §1250]

163. "zwei Seelen leben in meiner Brust" - German: "Two souls live in my breast", from Goethe’s Faust (Part I, Scene 2). Quoted by Colonel Dobronravov in reference to inner conflict. - cue: zwei Seelen leben in meiner Brust. [Reference: §1271]

164. Blue Star - A as presented in the novel or as presented in the novel’s symbolism society; possibly echoing émigré or Masonic networks, introduced as a target of NKVD surveillance. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

165. Cerebral Liquefaction - A satirical pseudonym for an imaginary collection of Russian Futurist or decadent poetry. - cue: Cerebral Liquefaction. [Reference: §1321]

166. In daemone deus - Latin: "In the demon, God"; a mystical-theological formula reflecting duality or paradox. - cue: In the demon, God. [Reference: not found]

167. Prince of This World - Biblical title for Satan (cf. John 12:31); here used as a metaphysical-religious symbol and the book’s core motif. - cue: Prince. [Reference: §1]

168. Engineer of human souls - Stalin-era idiom for propagandists or ideological educators; used here with irony. - cue: Engineer. [Reference: §17]

169. Red Cardinal - A metaphorical title for Rudnev’s role as Stalin’s spiritual-ideological enforcer, analogous to Richelieu or Mazarin. - cue: s role as Stalin. [Reference: not found]

170. Sirin - Mythological Slavic bird of sorrow; also Nabokov’s pseudonym when writing in exile. Symbolises artistic ambiguity. - cue: Sirin. [Reference: §1304]

171. Orthodox rehabilitation - Stalin’s wartime thaw towards the Russian Orthodox Church, depicted here as a cynical strategic shift under Rudnev’s influence. - cue: Orthodox. [Reference: §327]

172. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

173. Maksim Rudnev - General of State Security; head of the 13th Department; later Marshal and First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. - cue: Maksim Rudnev. [Reference: §49]

174. Boris - Engineering student; younger brother of Maksim; becomes Agitprop instructor. - cue: Boris. [Reference: §51]

175. Colonel Pitirim Dobronravov / Archbishop Pitirim - NKVD colonel and Rudnev’s religious policy associate; assumes a clerical role under cover. - cue: Colonel Pitirim Dobronravov. [Reference: not found]

176. Sovinformburo - Soviet Information Bureau responsible for propaganda during the war. - cue: Sovinformburo. [Reference: §1252]

177. Okhrana - Tsarist-era secret police, referenced in contrast to Soviet structures. - cue: Okhrana. [Reference: §484]

178. Stolypin - Pyotr Stolypin, reformist Prime Minister under Nicholas II. - cue: Stolypin. [Reference: §1263]

179. Bogrov - Dmitry Bogrov, Stolypin's assassin; depicted as an archetype of dual loyalties. - cue: Bogrov. [Reference: §1263]

180. Great Purge - Period of political repression and mass arrests (1936-1938). - cue: Great Purge. [Reference: §29]

181. "Hawk" - Informal name for the Polikarpov I-16, a Soviet fighter aircraft. - cue: Hawk. [Reference: §1250]

182. 13th Department of the NKVD - fictional secret division for psychological, ideological and metaphysical warfare. - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

183. Blue Star - society allegedly targeted by the NKVD. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

184. "Cerebral Liquefaction" - Imagined title for decadent Russian Symbolist poetry; reflects Rudnev's immersion in irrational aesthetics. - cue: Cerebral Liquefaction. [Reference: §1321]

185. In daemone deus - Theological expression meaning "God in the demon", used by Rudnev to explain totalitarian dialectics. - cue: God in the demon. [Reference: not found]

186. Spiritualism, occultism, anthroposophy - Ideological or mystical currents monitored and suppressed by the NKVD. - cue: Spiritualism. [Reference: §175]

187. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) - Successor to the NKVD, with expanded peacetime powers. - cue: Ministry. [Reference: §14]

188. Prince of This World - The devil; theological root of Klimov's metaphysical-political thesis. - cue: Prince. [Reference: §1]

189. Research Institute of Professor Rudnev - State-funded centre for ideological and metaphysical control. - cue: Research Institute. [Reference: §23]

190. Agitprop - Agitation and Propaganda Department; Party body for ideological indoctrination. - cue: Agitprop. [Reference: §1367]

191. "House of Evil Good" - The chapter title echoes the epigraph by N. Berdyaev. The phrase reflects the theme of ambiguous or paradoxical relationships between good and evil. - cue: House of Evil Good. [Reference: §1359]

192. "Ministry of Internal Affairs can-do girls" - Literal rendering of можно-герлс МВД, referring to women deployed by the MVD for surveillance and influence operations. - cue: Ministry of Internal Affairs can-do girls. [Reference: §1369]

193. "Legion" / "Legionary" - Derived from Mark 5:9, this term is used throughout the chapter as a designation for individuals influenced or controlled by malign spiritual or ideological forces. - cue: Legion. [Reference: §35]

194. "Dialectical Christianity" and "Higher Sociology" - Terminology used by characters in the 13th Department to describe systems that combine elements of Christian theology with dialectical materialism. - cue: Dialectical Christianity. [Reference: §726]

195. Freud, Lombroso, Nordau - Referenced as intellectual authorities within the 13th Department's analytical framework. Their ideas are cited in support of psychological and behavioural interpretations of revolutionary figures. - cue: Freud. [Reference: §23]

196. "Blue blood" and Rh factor - The term "blue blood" is associated here with the negative Rh factor in blood, as discussed in the text in relation to biology and social class. - cue: Blue blood. [Reference: §248]

197. "Show-it-off" - Rendered for the Russian neologism х-показчик, meaning exhibitionist. - cue: Show-it-off. [Reference: §1462]

198. "Disintegration of the Atom" - Title of a prose work by Georgy Ivanov, interpreted in the text as symbolising psychological breakdown. - cue: Disintegration of the Atom. [Reference: §1507]

199. "We are the secret police of the new Russia" - Quotation from the chapter indicating the ideological self-identification of the 13th Department's personnel. - cue: We are the secret police of the new Russia. [Reference: §1848]

200. Final lines ("not awarded for nothing") - Emphasise that the ranks and decorations of the characters signify real institutional authority. - cue: not awarded for nothing. [Reference: §1545]

201. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

202. Guriya - transliterated term for courtesans around the MVD, applied here to women deployed for surveillance or seduction. - cue: Guriya. [Reference: §1369]

203. Agitprop - standard abbreviation for 'agitation and propaganda' instructor or officer, used throughout. - cue: agitation and propaganda. [Reference: §1908]

204. Rituale Romanum - retained Latin title for the Roman Catholic exorcism liturgy. - cue: Rituale Romanum. [Reference: §1385]

205. Priesta New Ritual - rendered as titled in the text, retaining unconventional form. - cue: Priesta New Ritual. [Reference: §1389]

206. Legion - used symbolically for hosts of demons or spiritual forces; within the MVD code, also used as a category for ideologically infected individuals. - cue: Legion. [Reference: §35]

207. Dialectical Christianity - term used by Klimov's characters to describe a syncretic fusion of Christian theology with Marxist dialectics. - cue: Dialectical Christianity. [Reference: §726]

208. Higher sociology - an invented term by the MVD thinkers, suggesting a supra-Marxist spiritual analysis of historical and revolutionary processes. - cue: Higher. [Reference: §327]

209. Marshal of State Security - Maksim's full rank, clarified for consistency. - cue: Marshal. [Reference: §40]

210. Legionary - extended use from previous; individuals 'possessed' in a spiritual or ideological sense. - cue: possessed. [Reference: §28]

211. Maternal complex - rendering of the 'matyerny kompleks', associated with Oedipal themes, as discussed in psychoanalytic idiom. - cue: matyerny kompleks. [Reference: not found]

212. Legionisation - Klimov's coined term implying possession or corruption by satanic influence, frequently blamed for deviance. - cue: Legionisation. [Reference: §927]

213. Dog Crate - rendered for 'Sobachy yashchik', symbolist/anarchist publication; connected to themes of nihilism and literary grotesque. - cue: Sobachy yashchik. [Reference: not found]

214. Maternal complex - added for consistency with prior segment. - cue: Maternal. [Reference: §922]

215. Ink-souls - literal rendering of ‘чернильные души’, a Klimovism for writers aligned with spiritual decay or cowardice. - cue: чернильные души. [Reference: not found]

216. Humanist/satanist - dual terms used in Klimov’s framing of esoteric societies; preserved as ideological slurs rather than clinical labels. - cue: Humanist. [Reference: §685]

217. ‘Obrez’ in Russian colloquially refers to both a sawn-off weapon and the medical circumcision referenced here; the ambiguity is deliberately exploited in the dialogue. - cue: Obrez. [Reference: §1584]

218. ‘Suliko’ is a well-known Georgian song, reportedly Stalin’s favourite. - cue: Suliko. [Reference: §1564]

219. ‘Red corner’ (красный уголок) refers to the space in Soviet institutions for political propaganda. - cue: Red corner. [Reference: §1570]

220. Yersh is a cocktail of beer and vodka, popular in Soviet drinking culture. - cue: Yersh. [Reference: §1589]

221. Torgsin was a Soviet hard-currency shop network where people could exchange valuables (especially gold) for food during times of famine. - cue: Torgsin. [Reference: §1600]

222. “According to relics, the unction” plays on a Russian proverb about giving honours befitting the object - here turned bitterly ironic. - cue: According to relics, the unction. [Reference: §1636]

223. Sic transit gloria mundi - Latin: “Thus passes worldly glory.” - cue: Thus passes worldly glory.. [Reference: not found]

224. Shapka of Monomakh - the Russian imperial crown; a metaphor for power. - cue: Shapka. [Reference: not found]

225. Harun al-Rashid - Abbasid caliph known for walking incognito among the people. - cue: Harun. [Reference: §1694]

226. Fouché and Talleyrand - prominent figures who served through multiple French regimes, known for survival and influence behind the scenes. - cue: Talleyrand. [Reference: §455]

227. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

228. Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin - formal full name usage - cue: Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. [Reference: §1556]

229. Kakhetian wine - Georgian wine variety - cue: Kakhetian. [Reference: §1564]

230. Red corner - agitational room in Soviet institutions - cue: Red. [Reference: §15]

231. Obrez - here, rendered according to context: 'sawn-off' for weapons, 'circumcision' for the medical term - cue: sawn-off. [Reference: §1583]

232. Kinto - Georgian urban tradesman/performer, used here to denote a type - cue: Kinto. [Reference: §1564]

233. Yersh - beer mixed with vodka - cue: Yersh. [Reference: §1589]

234. Torgsin - state-linked (as depicted) hard-currency shops in the USSR - cue: Torgsin. [Reference: §1600]

235. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - prison camp enforcer character - cue: Fedka. [Reference: §49]

236. Blue Star - ambiguous political charge (possibly as presented in the novel or as presented in the novel's symbolism) - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

237. Party card - symbol of official Soviet Party membership, used metaphorically throughout - cue: Party. [Reference: §37]

238. Dry-hander (сухоручка) - congenital disability of the hand - cue: Dry. [Reference: §172]

239. Carrionma - perhaps a distorted or ironic term for carcinoma - cue: Carrionma. [Reference: not found]

240. Katso - nickname of the minister (possibly Georgian) - cue: Katso. [Reference: §1712]

241. Power complex - as presented in the novel's symbolism term for the brain's governing function - cue: s symbolism term for the brain. [Reference: not found]

242. Monomakh's Cap - traditional Russian symbol of royal power - cue: Monomakh. [Reference: §1698]

243. Harun al-Rashid - used metaphorically for an incognito ruler - cue: Harun. [Reference: §1694]

244. MVD - Ministry of Internal Affairs - cue: Ministry. [Reference: §14]

245. Maksim Aleksanych - consistent rendering of character name - cue: Maksim Aleksanych. [Reference: §1698]

246. [TN: The Russian term негры has been rendered as 'negroes' to reflect the historical context and ideological tone of the original text. This term is no longer considered appropriate in contemporary usage.] - cue: negroes. [Reference: §1739]

247. [TN: 'Baba Yaga' is a mythical witch-like figure from Russian folklore, typically portrayed as a cannibalistic crone living in a hut on chicken legs.] - cue: Baba Yaga. [Reference: §1735]

248. [TN: "Stupa" is rendered here as "mortar", the traditional translation of the Russian "ступа", referring to a pestle-and-mortar grinding vessel, which is a folkloric feature of Baba Yaga's travel.] - cue: Stupa. [Reference: not found]

249. [TN: "Mujerado" is a Spanish colonial term used here in the context of gender-altering rituals attributed to Maya priestly induction; "mujer" means woman in Spanish.] - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

250. [TN: "Modorra" as a term for fatal melancholia is preserved in transliteration for historical and contextual accuracy.] - cue: Modorra. [Reference: §1764]

251. [TN: The Russian можно-герлс is a slang adaptation of “motion girls” or “model girls”, used ironically in Soviet jargon to denote women deployed in intelligence operations; rendered here phonetically to preserve tone and ambiguity.] - cue: motion girls. [Reference: not found]

252. [TN: Mata Hari (Margaretha Geertruida Zelle) was a Dutch exotic dancer and courtesan convicted of espionage during World War I.] - cue: Mata Hari. [Reference: §1786]

253. [TN: Berdyaev refers to Nikolai Berdyaev, Russian religious philosopher known for his existentialist and metaphysical critiques.] - cue: Berdyaev. [Reference: §690]

254. [TN: De Daemonialitate (On Demoniality) is a real treatise by Sinistrari of Ameno, a 17th-century Catholic theologian.] - cue: De Daemonialitate. [Reference: §1790]

255. [TN: The phrase ‘felt for his pistol’ is a literal rendering of the Russian idiom implying both reassurance and latent menace.] - cue: felt for his pistol. [Reference: not found]

256. [TN: Elworthy’s The Evil Eye (1895) is a documented English work exploring superstition and folklore.] - cue: Elworthy. [Reference: §1800]

257. [TN: Mujerado again refers to male attendants ritually feminised, as described earlier in the Maya context; here adapted as a term of occult, satirical import.] - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

258. [TN: The phrase minetteur is a pseudo-Frenchism used in the original to invoke oral sexual slang; rendered here phonetically to preserve tone and euphemism.] - cue: The. [Reference: §4]

259. [TN: Denis de Rougemont was a 20th-century Swiss philosopher known for writing on love, faith, and European culture.] - cue: Denis. [Reference: §1810]

260. [TN: Compendium Maleficarum is a historical demonological text by Francesco Maria Guazzo, published in 1608.] - cue: Compendium Maleficarum. [Reference: §1812]

261. [TN: “Finger-made” (Пальцем деланные) is a crude expression implying unnatural conception; preserved literally due to its use as a codified formula in the narrative.] - cue: Finger-made. [Reference: §1829]

262. [TN: Nagant - a revolver widely used in Russia and the USSR.] - cue: Nagant. [Reference: §113]

263. [TN: “Where the crayfish hibernate” (где раки зимуют) - Russian idiom meaning “I’ll show you what’s what” or “I’ll teach you a lesson.”] - cue: Where the crayfish hibernate. [Reference: §1841]

264. [TN: Lombroso refers to Cesare Lombroso, Italian criminologist; Nordau refers to Max Nordau, social critic.] - cue: Lombroso. [Reference: §965]

265. [TN: “Supreme measure of punishment” (высшая мера наказания) - Soviet legal euphemism for capital punishment, usually by shooting.] - cue: Supreme measure of punishment. [Reference: §1875]

266. [TN: “Cadets” refers to members of the Constitutional Democratic Party in pre-revolutionary Russia.] - cue: Cadets. [Reference: not found]

267. [TN: “Progressive brain liquefaction” (прогрессирующий мозговой разжиж) - idiomatic phrasing for severe mental decline/dementia.] - cue: Progressive brain liquefaction. [Reference: §1879]

268. [TN: “My dear fellow” renders the ironic “дюша лубезный”, old-fashioned mocking address.] - cue: My dear fellow. [Reference: §1882]

269. [TN: Yezhov - Nikolai Yezhov, head of the NKVD before Beria, executed in 1940.] - cue: Yezhov. [Reference: §540]

270. [TN: Yagoda - Genrikh Yagoda, NKVD chief executed in 1938 during the doctors’ plot trials.] - cue: Yagoda. [Reference: §471]

271. [TN: “Autotoxins” - term from early Soviet medical jargon, referring to toxic by-products of metabolism causing self-poisoning.] - cue: Autotoxins. [Reference: §1899]

272. [TN: “Phylloxera” - an insect pest of grapevines, destructive to European vineyards in the 19th-20th centuries.] - cue: Phylloxera. [Reference: §1905]

273. [TN: “Citizen Berman” - alias assigned to Beria after his ‘conditional’ sentence.] - cue: Citizen Berman. [Reference: §1903]

274. [TN: The issue here intertwines political purges with questions of ethnicity and moral corruption, framed in characteristic of Klimov’s rhetoric.] - cue: The. [Reference: §4]

275. [TN: Demons (Бесы) by Dostoevsky, published 1872; the notorious “Stavrogin’s Confession” was omitted from the first edition.] - cue: Stavrogin. [Reference: §1919]

276. Glossary Updates - cue: Glossary Updates. [Reference: §2116]

277. Baba Yaga - retained in transliteration as the canonical folkloric figure. - cue: Baba Yaga. [Reference: §1735]

278. Mau Mau - rendered directly; denotes the Kenyan anti-colonial society. - cue: Mau Mau. [Reference: §1733]

279. Mátyás Rákosi - red dictator of Hungary, retained standard spelling. - cue: Hungary. [Reference: §1734]

280. Ana Pauker - Romanian communist leader, retained standard spelling. - cue: Ana Pauker. [Reference: §1224]

281. János Kádár - Hungarian communist politician, standard spelling. - cue: Hungarian. [Reference: §1734]

282. Ngola Mbande and Nzinga - historical Angolan figures, transliterated as per scholarly conventions. - cue: Ngola Mbande. [Reference: §1741]

283. Queen Nzinga (Nzinga Mbande) - Angolan queen, retained standard transliteration. - cue: Queen Nzinga. [Reference: §1744]

284. Antonio de Gaeta, Giovanni de Montecuccolo - Capuchin missionaries, standard historical forms. - cue: Antonio. [Reference: §1747]

285. Bishop Diego de Landa - Spanish missionary in Yucatán, historical name retained. - cue: Bishop Diego. [Reference: §1766]

286. Mujerado - Spanish colonial term used to denote ritual gender-altered attendants. - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

287. Modorra - preserved in Spanish as a culturally specific term. - cue: Modorra. [Reference: §1764]

288. Yuri Norozov - Soviet linguist credited with the decipherment of Maya script. - cue: Yuri Norozov. [Reference: §1769]

289. Rolf - German shepherd owned by Maksim Rudnev. - cue: Rolf. [Reference: §1364]

290. Pitirim - archbishop, now confirmed as a recurring character, general of the MVD in clerical disguise. - cue: Pitirim. [Reference: §1152]

291. Malinin - Lieutenant General and professor, associated with dark affairs of the MVD. - cue: Malinin. [Reference: §1772]

292. Можно-герлс - phonetic rendering preserved; see Note 1. - cue: Note. [Reference: §19]

293. CIA - Central Intelligence Agency, acronym undotted per style. - cue: Central Intelligence Agency. [Reference: §20]

294. Berdyaev - Russian philosopher; added for philosophical reference. - cue: Berdyaev. [Reference: §690]

295. Ludovico Sinistrari - retained Latinised name; 17th-century Franciscan demonologist. - cue: Ludovico Sinistrari. [Reference: §1790]

296. Frederick Elworthy - author of The Evil Eye, retained historical spelling. - cue: Frederick Elworthy. [Reference: §1800]

297. Semyon Arshakovich Ter-Petrosyan (Kamo) - revolutionary associate of Stalin, now added with full name. - cue: Semyon Arshakovich Ter. [Reference: §1796]

298. Malinovsky - Bolshevik agent of the Tsarist secret police (Okhrana). - cue: Malinovsky. [Reference: §1807]

299. Okhrana - Tsarist secret police; historical institution, undotted acronym per house style. - cue: Okhrana. [Reference: §484]

300. Denis de Rougemont - Swiss philosopher, cited in political-theological context. - cue: Denis. [Reference: §1810]

301. Ilse Koch - Buchenwald commandant's wife, historical figure cited in Nuremberg context. - cue: Ilse Koch. [Reference: §1815]

302. Prince Oblonsky - satirical allusion to Tolstoy's character, here repurposed as a false noble. - cue: Prince Oblonsky. [Reference: §1826]

303. Mujerado - reappears in occult context; see prior glossary entries. - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

304. Berdyaev - recurring figure; philosophical source of the Satan-Antichrist doctrine. - cue: Berdyaev. [Reference: §690]

305. “Blue Star” Case - introduced as an internal MVD case file; to be tracked if it reappears. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

306. Ivan Strannik - pseudonym of Mara’s finger-made son, also known as Mort. - cue: Ivan Strannik. [Reference: §77]

307. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - bandit, central figure in the “Blue Star” case. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

308. Schwarz-Chernykh family - recurring demonic lineage introduced. - cue: Schwarz. [Reference: §1824]

309. Nagant - revolver, Russian service weapon. - cue: Nagant. [Reference: §113]

310. “Blue Star” case - extended file concerning Fedka and his family’s origins. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

311. Olga - recurring figure, here half-angel, half-Martian. - cue: Olga. [Reference: §108]

312. Zinaida Genrikhovna - NKVD general, described as a hybrid of Satan and the Antichrist. - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna. [Reference: §610]

313. Perekop - Crimean isthmus, site of civil war battles; here “semi-hero” reference. - cue: semi-hero. [Reference: §1847]

314. Toptygin - general-inquisitor figure, epaulettes with axes. - cue: Toptygin. [Reference: §1450]

315. Lombroso - Cesare Lombroso, criminologist. - cue: Lombroso. [Reference: §965]

316. Nordau - Max Nordau, philosopher and critic. - cue: Nordau. [Reference: §969]

317. Kierkegaard - Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher. - cue: Kierkegaard. [Reference: §973]

318. Freud - Sigmund Freud, psychoanalyst. - cue: Freud. [Reference: §23]

319. Beria L. P. - Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, NKVD chief. - cue: Beria. [Reference: §269]

320. Lavrentiy Palych - Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, former Minister of Internal Affairs. - cue: Lavrentiy Palych. [Reference: §1877]

321. Cadets - Constitutional Democratic Party. - cue: Cadets. [Reference: not found]

322. “Formula of power” - explicitly tied here to sadism, homosexuality, impotence, and brain degeneration. - cue: Formula of power. [Reference: §968]

323. Red Pope - title used for Rudnev, implying supreme yet hidden power. - cue: Red Pope. [Reference: §1891]

324. Yezhov - former NKVD head, described as a degenerate and sexless creature. - cue: Yezhov. [Reference: §540]

325. Yagoda - NKVD chief, collector of poisons, executed. - cue: Yagoda. [Reference: §471]

326. Autotoxins - supposed internal poisons causing heart failure. - cue: Autotoxins. [Reference: §1899]

327. Citizen Berman - alias assigned to Beria after commutation of his death sentence. - cue: Citizen Berman. [Reference: §1903]

328. Phylloxera - grape root louse, used metaphorically in Rudnev's advice. - cue: Phylloxera. [Reference: §1905]

329. 'Combinations here more varied than in a kaleidoscope' - a literal rendering of the Russian idiom. - cue: Combinations here more varied than in a kaleidoscope. [Reference: not found]

330. Rossolimo - prominent Russian neurologist (1860-1928), known for work in child psychology and psychiatry. - cue: Rossolimo. [Reference: §982]

331. Tolstoy quotes from authentic diary entries; dates preserved. - cue: Tolstoy. [Reference: §703]

332. Kinsey's 37% - US sexologist Alfred Kinsey's controversial figure from mid-20th century studies on male sexual behaviour. - cue: s 37% - US sexologist Alfred Kinsey. [Reference: not found]

333. Novak and Soviet psychiatry - conversation faithfully rendered; context suggests an allusion to ideological psychiatry. - cue: Novak. [Reference: §2224]

334. Thirteenth Department - a fictional or hyper-secret department described in Klimov's work. - cue: Thirteenth Department. [Reference: not found]

335. Kinsey 4%/33% split - preserves Klimov's rhetorical framing and numerology. - cue: Kinsey. [Reference: §35]

336. Matthew 12:43-45 - translated with standard biblical phrasing from authorised British versions. - cue: Matthew. [Reference: §2206]

337. Khrushchev's Manege remarks - preserved with original tone and idiom. - cue: Khrushchev. [Reference: §1916]

338. Koestler's Gladiators - confirmed English title; matches inclusion in historical bibliography. - cue: Koestler. [Reference: §2277]

339. Bertram Wolfe / Strange Communists I Have Known - rendered per established bibliographic title. - cue: Bertram Wolfe. [Reference: §2269]

340. Harvard Project - refers to Nathan Leites' psychological-political research into Soviet behaviour. - cue: Harvard Project. [Reference: §18]

341. Thirteen symbolism - retained throughout with rhetorical weight per source; no numerological speculation added. - cue: Thirteen. [Reference: §26]

342. Der Monat / Melvin Lasky - preserved in original spelling; confirmed historical references. - cue: Der Monat. [Reference: §2284]

343. Three/Four/Five - reflects Russian academic grading scale: 3 = pass, 4 = good, 5 = excellent. - cue: Three. [Reference: §15]

344. Let it lie with us - original phrase preserved; implies indefinite delay. - cue: Let. [Reference: §17]

345. Roman-Gazeta / Novy Mir - prominent Soviet literary journals. - cue: Roman. [Reference: §175]

346. Worse than Hitler - reflects the emotional idiom in Soviet discourse; preserved verbatim. - cue: Worse. [Reference: §482]

347. Psychological litmus paper - metaphor retained with clarity. - cue: Psychological. [Reference: §18]

348. Scandal etymology - translated with reference to Latin and Gospel usage (Matthew 18:7). - cue: Scandal. [Reference: §672]

349. Relativism vs truth - retains author's rhetorical structure; no reinterpretation or toning. - cue: Relativism. [Reference: not found]

350. Stereotypes / archetypes - distinction clarified as per source's intended contrast. - cue: Stereotypes. [Reference: not found]

351. Light and darkness - biblical allusions preserved in phrasing (cf. Genesis 1:3). - cue: Light. [Reference: §30]

352. Glossary updates - cue: Glossary. [Reference: §2116]

353. Rossolimo - psychiatrist, canonical spelling - cue: Rossolimo. [Reference: §982]

354. Higher Sociology - rendered as 'higher sociology' per source - cue: higher sociology. [Reference: §757]

355. Power complex - fixed term introduced for комплекс власти - cue: Power. [Reference: §13]

356. Legionnaires - retained for легионеры per internal consistency - cue: Legionnaires. [Reference: §37]

357. Kaleidoscope - metaphor preserved as idiomatic match - cue: Kaleidoscope. [Reference: §1004]

358. Joseph Novak - fixed spelling for author - cue: Joseph Novak. [Reference: §2224]

359. Our Future, Comrade! - translated title of Novak's memoir - cue: Our Future. [Reference: §31]

360. Abel Yenukidze - canonical rendering, with Abel preserved for biblical allusion - cue: Abel Yenukidze. [Reference: §2229]

361. Gerald Dickler - correct spelling - cue: Gerald Dickler. [Reference: §2230]

362. Man on Trial - translated book title, confirmed as historical reference - cue: Man. [Reference: §15]

363. Thirteenth Department - retained as capitalised proper noun - cue: Thirteenth Department. [Reference: not found]

364. Donald Cory - fixed spelling - cue: Donald Cory. [Reference: §2236]

365. The Homosexual in America - canonical English title - cue: The Homosexual. [Reference: §2236]

366. Wilhelm Reich - canonical spelling - cue: Wilhelm Reich. [Reference: §2238]

367. The Sexual Revolution - confirmed book title - cue: The Sexual Revolution. [Reference: §2238]

368. Legionnaires / legion - continued as fixed term - cue: Legionnaires. [Reference: §37]

369. Zhutovsky - transliteration for painter - cue: Zhutovsky. [Reference: §2260]

370. The Case of Comrade Tulayev - English title of Victor Serge's novel - cue: The Case. [Reference: §27]

371. Victor Serge - fixed name for Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich - cue: Victor Serge. [Reference: §2269]

372. Arthur Koestler - canonical spelling - cue: Arthur Koestler. [Reference: §2277]

373. Darkness at Noon - confirmed English title - cue: Darkness. [Reference: §201]

374. The Great Terror - title of Robert Conquest's book - cue: The Great Terror. [Reference: §2279]

375. George Kennan - ambassador, academic; retained per historical record - cue: George Kennan. [Reference: §2281]

376. Institute for Advanced Study - rendered for Принстонский Институт Повышенных Знаний - cue: Institute. [Reference: §17]

377. Nathan Leites - Harvard analyst associated with psycho-political strategy - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

378. Melvin Lasky / Der Monat - fixed forms - cue: Melvin Lasky. [Reference: §2285]

379. Statue of Liberty - rendered directly; no added interpretation - cue: Statue. [Reference: §2299]

380. Roman-Gazeta - rendered in transliteration as a Soviet literary journal - cue: Roman. [Reference: §175]

381. Novy Mir - transliterated as the well-known literary periodical - cue: Novy Mir. [Reference: not found]

382. Tvardovsky - fixed spelling for Aleksandr Tvardovsky, editor of Novy Mir - cue: Tvardovsky. [Reference: not found]

383. Wilhelm Reich - Author of The Sexual Revolution, cited on the Great Purge - cue: Wilhelm Reich. [Reference: §2238]

384. Thomas Mann - Nobel laureate referenced regarding degeneration - cue: Thomas Mann. [Reference: §36]

385. Jack Ruby - Killer of Lee Harvey Oswald - cue: Jack Ruby. [Reference: §25]

386. Lee Harvey Oswald - Assassin of US President John F. Kennedy - cue: Lee Harvey Oswald. [Reference: not found]

387. Maksim Rudnev - Fictional Marshal of State Security in The Prince - cue: Maksim Rudnev. [Reference: §49]

388. 13th Department - Ultra-secret police division in Klimov's novel - cue: Department. [Reference: §14]

389. Institute of Black Professors - Fictional or metaphorical think tank in The Prince - cue: Institute. [Reference: §17]

390. 9 September 1960 - Date of Khrushchev's New York visit; corrected from erroneous 1969 - cue: September. [Reference: §1184]

391. Latent homosexuality - Term used for Kinsey's 33% category - cue: Latent. [Reference: §1757]

392. Twilight of the gods - Literary reference to Hitler's death and marriage - cue: Twilight. [Reference: §1982]

393. Zhutovsky - Modernist artist confronted by Khrushchev in 1964 - cue: Zhutovsky. [Reference: §2260]

394. Victor Serge / Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich - Revolutionary writer; author of The Case of Comrade Tulayev - cue: Victor Serge. [Reference: §2269]

395. Bertram Wolfe - US State Department adviser and anti-communist writer; author of Strange Communists I Have Known - cue: Bertram Wolfe. [Reference: §2269]

396. Arthur Koestler - Novelist and former communist; author of Darkness at Noon and The Gladiators - cue: Arthur Koestler. [Reference: §2277]

397. Robert Conquest - British historian and poet; author of The Great Terror - cue: Robert Conquest. [Reference: §2279]

398. Voice of America - US state-run international broadcaster - cue: Voice. [Reference: §23]

399. Hoover Institute - Research centre at Stanford University focusing on war and revolution - cue: Hoover Institute. [Reference: §2276]

400. The Gladiators - Koestler's novel about Spartacus; referenced in bibliographies of homosexuality in literature - cue: The Gladiators. [Reference: §2278]

401. George Kennan (Jr.) - Former US ambassador to the USSR, Princeton professor, reviewer of The Great Terror - cue: George Kennan. [Reference: §2281]

402. George Kennan Sr. - Revolutionary propagandist among Russian POWs in Japan (1906) - cue: George Kennan Sr. [Reference: §2281]

403. Nathan Leites - Harvard researcher linked to psychoanalytic study of Bolshevism - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

404. Melvin Lasky - Editor of Der Monat, chronicler of the Oxford Conference on anti-Bolshevik strategy - cue: Melvin Lasky. [Reference: §2285]

405. Institute for Advanced Study - Princeton-based research centre formerly home to Einstein - cue: Institute. [Reference: §17]

406. “Lenin complex” - Psychoanalytic interpretation of Lenin’s personality, linked to latent homosexuality - cue: Lenin complex. [Reference: §19]

407. Rorschach test - Psychological diagnostic tool cited in context of intelligence screening - cue: Rorschach. [Reference: §25]

408. McCarthyism - US anti-communist purge era, likened here to the Soviet Great Purge - cue: Soviet Great Purge. [Reference: not found]

409. Great Seal of the United States - Symbol on the US $1 bill, analysed as esoteric social pyramid - cue: Great Seal. [Reference: §2297]

410. Statue of Liberty - Alleged gift from French esoteric societies with hidden symbolism - cue: Statue. [Reference: §2299]

411. social modernism - Coined here to describe Klimov’s hybrid of socialist realism and modernist critique - cue: Coined. [Reference: §2142]

412. tainopis - “secret writing” or coded language used to conceal meaning in plain sight - cue: secret writing. [Reference: not found]

413. ved’ma / vedun - Witch/seer in Old Russian, derived from vedat’, “to know” - cue: ma / vedun - Witch/seer in Old Russian, derived from vedat. [Reference: not found]

414. Commissar Rudnev - Fictional head of State Security in The Prince, analogue to Dr Faust - cue: Commissar Rudnev. [Reference: §463]

415. Freudian revolution - The notion that revolutionary behaviour is driven by psycho-sexual complexes - cue: Freudian. [Reference: §23]

416. elixir of life - Cryptic metaphor in the novel, possibly tied to coded degeneracy - cue: Cryptic. [Reference: §304]

417. Zinaida Genrikhovna / Hero of Perekop - Allegorical or symbolic characters in The Prince - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna. [Reference: §610]

418. Our Country - rendered for Наша Страна, Argentine newspaper. - cue: Our Country. [Reference: §14]

419. Russian Life - rendering of Русская Жизнь, San Francisco-based émigré newspaper. - cue: Russian Life. [Reference: §35]

420. Nathan Leites - retained spelling per academic convention. - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

421. TsOPE - Central Union of Post-War Emigrants from the USSR (ЦОПЭ) - cue: TsOPE. [Reference: §20]

422. Svoboda - Russian-language journal edited by Klimov - cue: Svoboda. [Reference: §20]

423. Antikommunist - German-language journal edited by Klimov - cue: Antikommunist. [Reference: §20]

424. Frederick Barghoorn - rendered per academic usage - cue: Frederick Barghoorn. [Reference: §25]

425. “Lenin Complex” - retained as conceptual term central to the text - cue: “Lenin Complex”. [Reference: §27]

426. Index Librorum Prohibitorum - Latin title of the Vatican’s Index of Prohibited Books, retained untranslated - cue: Index Librorum Prohibitorum. [Reference: §29]

427. “monkey business” - informal Americanism preserved in quotation - cue: “monkey business”. [Reference: not found]

428. Kim Philby - British intelligence officer and Soviet double agent, retained as known historical figure - cue: Kim Philby. [Reference: §27]

429. Jack Ruby - transliterated per English convention - cue: Jack Ruby. [Reference: §25]

430. Samizdat - preserved in transliteration as established term for clandestine literature - cue: Samizdat. [Reference: not found]

431. Doctor Faustus - rendered with reference to Thomas Mann’s novel - cue: Doctor Faustus. [Reference: §36]

432. Marilyn Monroe - kept as standard reference - cue: Marilyn Monroe. [Reference: §38]

433. The Prince - referring to Machiavelli’s work, retained in conventional form - cue: The Prince. [Reference: §37]

434. “Red cardinal” - Soviet political metaphor for hidden ideological operator, retained - cue: “Red cardinal”. [Reference: not found]

435. GPU - State Political Directorate (Soviet secret police precursor to the NKVD) - cue: GPU. [Reference: §59]

436. NKVD - People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs - cue: NKVD. [Reference: §59]

437. Korovin pistol - Soviet compact semi-automatic pistol used by security forces - cue: Korovin pistol. [Reference: not found]

438. Dutch stove - translated for “печь-голландка” - cue: Dutch stove. [Reference: §67]

439. Rider Haggard - rendered in full as H. Rider Haggard, British adventure novelist - cue: Rider Haggard. [Reference: §68]

440. Montezuma’s Daughter - rendered with canonical English title - cue: Montezuma’s Daughter. [Reference: §68]

441. “crimson tabs” - rendering of Soviet insignia denoting GPU/NKVD status - cue: “crimson tabs”. [Reference: not found]

442. Mauser - German semi-automatic pistol, common among Soviet officers - cue: Mauser. [Reference: §77]

443. Petrovsky Park - retained in transliteration as a known Moscow location - cue: Petrovsky Park. [Reference: §113]

444. Frolovka - rendering of “Фроловка” rifle retained after first mention - cue: Frolovka. [Reference: §92]

445. Nagant - seven-shot revolver used in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union - cue: Nagant. [Reference: §113]

446. Komsomol - Communist Youth League (Коммунистический союз молодёжи) - cue: Komsomol. [Reference: §114]

447. Bobka, Borya - affectionate diminutive for Boris - cue: Bobka, Borya. [Reference: not found]

448. GPU authorised officer - retained literal title - cue: GPU authorised officer. [Reference: §59]

449. Dog whip - literal for ‘собачья плеть’; tied to German shepherd context - cue: Dog whip. [Reference: §70]

450. “The sun” - gymnastic move, unaltered for context - cue: “The sun”. [Reference: §74]

451. “Little madams” - translated euphemistically from “дамочки” - cue: “Little madams”. [Reference: §106]

452. Ivan Strannik - introduced as Boris’s classmate - cue: Ivan Strannik. [Reference: §77]

453. Bashi-bazouk - Ottoman irregular soldier, used metaphorically by father - cue: Bashi. [Reference: §85]

454. Zavalyshin - retained for classmate who committed suicide - cue: Zavalyshin. [Reference: §114]

455. Peschanaya Street - transliterated Moscow street name - cue: Peschanaya Street. [Reference: §115]

456. Grass widow - idiomatic British term used for woman with absent husband - cue: Grass widow. [Reference: §119]

457. Petrovsky Park - retained Moscow place name - cue: Petrovsky Park. [Reference: §113]

458. Registry office - British English for civil marriage bureau - cue: Registry office. [Reference: not found]

459. Olenka - affectionate diminutive for Olga, retained in dialogue - cue: Olenka. [Reference: §122]

460. “Silent angel” - phrase linking back to chapter title - cue: “Silent angel”. [Reference: not found]

461. Mortice lock - for ‘английский замок’ - cue: Mortice lock. [Reference: §130]

462. Browning - standard pistol translation, kept as is - cue: Browning. [Reference: §60]

463. The Golden Bough - canonical title of Frazer’s work, subtitle rendered as per source - cue: The Golden Bough. [Reference: §166]

464. Lenin Library - fixed rendering of Библиотека им. Ленина - cue: Lenin Library. [Reference: §174]

465. Arthur Edward Waite - transliteration of Артур Байта - cue: Arthur Edward Waite. [Reference: §175]

466. Deptford, Tisbury, Hertford - historical English place names rendered in standard British spelling - cue: Deptford, Tisbury, Hertford. [Reference: not found]

467. NKVD Special Research Fund - rendering of “Научно-исследовательский спец-фонд НКВД” - cue: NKVD Special Research Fund. [Reference: §218]

468. Belladonna - retained standard pharmacological term - cue: Belladonna. [Reference: §235]

469. H. Rider Haggard - canonical spelling of Reider Khaggard - cue: H. Rider Haggard. [Reference: §68]

470. Berezovka - rendered in transliteration as a proper noun for the dacha village - cue: Berezovka. [Reference: §258]

471. ‘White bone and blue blood’ - maintained as a literal phrase reflecting the idiomatic Russian ‘белая кость и голубая кровь’ - cue: ‘White bone and blue blood’. [Reference: not found]

472. Tibia - used for ‘берцовая кость’ to match anatomical precision - cue: Tibia. [Reference: §245]

473. Thirteenth Department - 13-й отдел: translated consistently as Thirteenth Department. - cue: Thirteenth Department. [Reference: not found]

474. Order of Lenin - retained as is, highest Soviet honour. - cue: Order of Lenin. [Reference: §388]

475. Commissar for State Security 3rd Class - Комиссар госбезопасности 3 ранга: equivalent to major general of the NKVD. - cue: Commissar for State Security 3rd Class. [Reference: not found]

476. Pimy - Samoyedic soft boots. - cue: Pimy. [Reference: not found]

477. Malleus Maleficarum - Hammer of Witches. - cue: Malleus Maleficarum. [Reference: §309]

478. Spectroscope - modern instrument retained as is. - cue: Spectroscope. [Reference: §293]

479. Blue folder - continued as established, the main repository of Maksim’s classified notes. - cue: Blue folder. [Reference: §218]

480. Metaphysical - used here in opposition to strictly sexual or psychological interpretations; conveys Klimov’s thematic emphasis. - cue: Metaphysical. [Reference: §736]

481. Bulla - retained untranslated for historical accuracy. - cue: Bulla. [Reference: not found]

482. Berezovka - transliterated as Berezovka. - cue: Berezovka. [Reference: §258]

483. Enemy of the people - consistently rendered from ‘враг народа’. - cue: Enemy of the people. [Reference: §583]

484. Maksim - unchanged; standard form used throughout. - cue: Maksim. [Reference: §49]

485. 13th Department of the NKVD - consistently rendered; contextually distinct from the official 12. - cue: th Department of the NKVD. [Reference: §459]

486. Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli - NKVD General, former noblewoman, executioner - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna Orbeli. [Reference: §610]

487. Hero of Perekop - Zinaida's brother, impostor, former barber and actor - cue: Hero of Perekop. [Reference: §614]

488. Cheka - Soviet secret police (predecessor to GPU, NKVD) - cue: Cheka. [Reference: §610]

489. Petrovsky Park - A park in Moscow - cue: Petrovsky Park. [Reference: §113]

490. Honorary Golden Weapon of the Revolutionary Military Council - decoration for military merit - cue: Honorary Golden Weapon of the Revolutionary. [Reference: §619]

491. George Sinclair - author of The Invisible World of Satan (1875) - cue: George Sinclair. [Reference: §671]

492. Thomas Weir and Jean Weir - historical figures referenced as analogues - cue: Thomas Weir and Jean Weir. [Reference: not found]

493. Blue Star - secret religious-philosophical society, central to the chapter - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

494. Exhibit No. 127-D - item related to case against Zinaida Genrikhovna - cue: Exhibit No. 127. [Reference: §659]

495. NKVD 13th Department - unit dealing with esoteric or ideological cases - cue: NKVD 13th Department. [Reference: not found]

496. Scarab - dung beetle used symbolically in Ancient Egyptian esotericism - cue: Scarab. [Reference: §663]

497. Vladimir Solovyov - Russian religious philosopher, associated with mystical theology - cue: Vladimir Solovyov. [Reference: not found]

498. Nikolai Berdyaev - Russian existentialist philosopher, central to the critique here - cue: Nikolai Berdyaev. [Reference: not found]

499. God-seekers - term for early 20th-century Russian religious philosophers - cue: God. [Reference: §29]

500. Blue Star - society; term now linked with satanic/god-seeker sects - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

501. Black Mass - ritual described involving parody of Christian liturgy - cue: Black Mass. [Reference: §696]

502. Gurdjieff - mystic known for esoteric spiritual teachings - cue: Gurdjieff. [Reference: §695]

503. 13th Department - NKVD unit investigating ideological, religious and esoteric offences - cue: th Department. [Reference: §14]

504. Ivan Strannik (senior) - Futurist poet under scrutiny in the file - cue: Ivan Strannik (senior). [Reference: not found]

505. Dr Bykov - as presented in the novel (?) NKVD doctor cited for psychiatric evaluations - cue: Dr Bykov. [Reference: §715]

506. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - notorious thug, brother of Ivan Strannik - cue: Fedka the Cross. [Reference: §49]

507. Georges Geyer - Olga's father, Baltic German, associated with occultism - cue: Georges Geyer. [Reference: §723]

508. Dora Mazurkina - Olga's mother, Bolshevik and friend of Lenin's wife - cue: Dora Mazurkina. [Reference: §724]

509. Third Eye - mystical faculty of perception used metaphorically - cue: Third Eye. [Reference: §722]

510. 'Made with a finger' - idiom for an artificially conceived or odd-looking child - cue: 'Made with a finger'. [Reference: not found]

511. Georgy Lozgachev - adopted son of Lenin's sister Anna - cue: Georgy Lozgachev. [Reference: §733]

512. 'Infamous hyphenated word' - symbol of ideological taboo, left unnamed - cue: 'Infamous hyphenated word'. [Reference: not found]

513. Comrade Satan - colloquial expression for the Devil, used by Maksim - cue: Comrade Satan. [Reference: §437]

514. Conveyor of death - euphemism for NKVD execution chambers - cue: Conveyor of death. [Reference: §745]

515. Legions - term used to suggest mass population or demonic hosts (cf. Biblical "Legion") - cue: Legions. [Reference: §1825]

516. Tares - metaphorical term used for political undesirables - cue: Tares. [Reference: §829]

517. Red Cardinal - Stalin's private nickname for Maksim Rudnev - cue: Red Cardinal. [Reference: §40]

518. Furnace of fire - biblical allusion, here used as justification for purges - cue: Furnace of fire. [Reference: §833]

519. Papa Innokenty - presumably a religious or ideological mentor figure, perhaps as presented in the novel - cue: Papa Innokenty. [Reference: §517]

520. Ivan Mort - pseudonym meaning "death" in Latin - cue: Ivan Mort. [Reference: §708]

521. Fedka Eye-Gouger - alias of Fedka the Cross-Eyed after self-mutilation - cue: Fedka Eye. [Reference: §846]

522. Permanent revolution - Trotskyist doctrine, reframed here as psychiatric diagnosis - cue: Permanent revolution. [Reference: §537]

523. Tragic freedom - Berdyaev's concept of destructive metaphysical liberty - cue: Tragic freedom. [Reference: §693]

524. Blue Star - clandestine society under NKVD scrutiny - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

525. Zavalyukhin - literary critic linked by surname and ideology to 'decay' - cue: Zavalyukhin. [Reference: §897]

526. Case of the Prince of This World - central metaphysical file in the novel - cue: Case of the Prince of This. [Reference: §942]

527. Grey folder - recurring NKVD file format, here as presented in the novel's symbolism of secret judgement - cue: Grey folder. [Reference: §917]

528. Poisoned keys - recurring metaphor for forbidden knowledge - cue: Poisoned keys. [Reference: §826]

529. Professor Rudnev - head of the NKVD's Scientific Research Institute - cue: Professor Rudnev. [Reference: §936]

530. 13th Department of the NKVD - secret department focused on ideological or psychiatric investigations - cue: th Department of the NKVD. [Reference: §459]

531. Professor Lombroso - Cesare Lombroso, criminologist - cue: Professor Lombroso. [Reference: §965]

532. Dr Nordau-Suedfeld - Max Nordau (pseudonym of Simon Maximilian Südfeld), author of Degeneration - cue: Dr Nordau. [Reference: §969]

533. Dr Freud - Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis - cue: Dr Freud. [Reference: §970]

534. Kierkegaard - Søren Kierkegaard, Danish existentialist philosopher - cue: Kierkegaard. [Reference: §973]

535. Rossolimo - Grigory Ivanovich Rossolimo, Russian psychiatrist - cue: Rossolimo. [Reference: §982]

536. Zinovy Sverdlov - adopted son of Maksim Gorky, brother of Yakov Sverdlov - cue: Zinovy Sverdlov. [Reference: §987]

537. Yakov Sverdlov - Soviet statesman, head of All-Russian Central Executive Committee - cue: Yakov Sverdlov. [Reference: §987]

538. NKVD Commission - internal security review body for case reassessment - cue: NKVD Commission. [Reference: §1011]

539. Great Purge - Stalinist campaign of political repression (1936-1938) - cue: Great Purge. [Reference: §29]

540. Supreme Soviet - formal legislative authority in the USSR - cue: Supreme Soviet. [Reference: §1010]

541. Cheka - early Soviet secret police - cue: Cheka. [Reference: §610]

542. Telemechanics - euphemism for NKVD torturers - cue: Telemechanics. [Reference: §1019]

543. Dzerzhinsky - founder of Cheka, "naked sword of the revolution" - cue: Dzerzhinsky. [Reference: §920]

544. Piłsudski - Józef Piłsudski, Polish revolutionary leader - cue: Piłsudski. [Reference: §549]

545. Rehabilitation through labour - Tolstoyan concept co-opted by Soviet penal ideology - cue: Rehabilitation through labour. [Reference: §984]

546. Concentration camps - Soviet forced labour camps (Gulag) seen as inheriting Tolstoyan labour principles - cue: Concentration camps. [Reference: §1052]

547. Yezhov - NKVD chief during peak of Great Purge - cue: Yezhov. [Reference: §540]

548. Black Raven - NKVD arrest vehicle - cue: Black Raven. [Reference: §1069]

549. Unity and struggle of opposites - Marxist dialectical law - cue: Unity and struggle of opposites. [Reference: §505]

550. "Sent up the chimney" - metaphor for state execution or erasure - cue: "Sent up the chimney". [Reference: not found]

551. Bobka - affectionate diminutive for Boris - cue: Bobka. [Reference: §51]

552. The serpent and the sword - emblem of the NKVD's 13th Department - cue: The serpent and the sword. [Reference: §949]

553. Red cardinal - ironic title for Maksim as Stalin's inquisitorial aide - cue: Red cardinal. [Reference: §40]

554. Hero of Socialist Labour - high civilian award in the USSR - cue: Hero of Socialist Labour. [Reference: §1140]

555. Hero of the Soviet Union - the USSR's highest honour - cue: Hero of the Soviet Union. [Reference: §1140]

556. Obscurantist - ideologically reactionary figure, as Klimov uses for Maksim - cue: Obscurantist. [Reference: §311]

557. Maksim: consistent transliteration of the NKVD Commissar. - cue: Maksim. [Reference: §49]

558. Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Bykov: NKVD Medical Service, professor of psychopathology. - cue: Colonel Ivan Vasilyevich Bykov. [Reference: §1152]

559. Colonel Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov: NKVD Technical Service, professor of religious cult history. - cue: Colonel Pitirim Fyodorovich Dobronravov. [Reference: §1152]

560. 13th Department (13-й отдел) of the NKVD: department specialising in ideological and occult matters. - cue: th Department (13. [Reference: not found]

561. Walpurgis Night: retained as standard term in European folklore. - cue: Walpurgis Night. [Reference: §1168]

562. Krasnaya Gorka: transliterated for cultural specificity, explained in note. - cue: Krasnaya Gorka. [Reference: §1173]

563. Gilles de Rais: historical figure; French nobleman, companion of Joan of Arc, later executed for heinous crimes - cue: Gilles de Rais. [Reference: §1182]

564. Tiffauges: Castle where de Rais committed his crimes - cue: Tiffauges. [Reference: §1185]

565. Place de la Madeleine: execution site in Nantes - cue: Place de la Madeleine. [Reference: §1189]

566. Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc): retained as 'Joan' consistently - cue: Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc). [Reference: not found]

567. Saint James and Saint Michael: names of saints to whom Gilles and Joan entrusted their souls - cue: Saint James and Saint Michael. [Reference: §1196]

568. Madame Kollontai: Alexandra Kollontai, Bolshevik revolutionary, advocate of free love - cue: Madame Kollontai. [Reference: §1215]

569. Yelena Stasova: Lenin associate, Party secretary - cue: Yelena Stasova. [Reference: §1220]

570. Zemlyachka: Bolshevik, known for role in Crimean Red Terror - cue: Zemlyachka. [Reference: §1221]

571. Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria): Spanish Communist leader - cue: Dolores Ibárruri (La Pasionaria). [Reference: not found]

572. Ana Pauker: Romanian Communist, known for internal purges - cue: Ana Pauker. [Reference: §1224]

573. Glauber's salt: historical term for sodium sulphate used as a laxative - cue: Glauber's salt. [Reference: §1227]

574. Maksim Rudnev - General of State Security; head of the 13th Department; later Marshal and First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. - cue: Maksim Rudnev. [Reference: §49]

575. Boris - Engineering student; younger brother of Maksim; becomes Agitprop instructor. - cue: Boris. [Reference: §51]

576. Colonel Pitirim Dobronravov / Archbishop Pitirim - NKVD colonel and Rudnev's religious policy associate; assumes a clerical role under cover. - cue: Colonel Pitirim Dobronravov / Archbishop Pitirim. [Reference: not found]

577. Sovinformburo - Soviet Information Bureau responsible for propaganda during the war. - cue: Sovinformburo. [Reference: §1252]

578. Okhrana - Tsarist-era secret police, referenced in contrast to Soviet structures. - cue: Okhrana. [Reference: §484]

579. Stolypin - Pyotr Stolypin, reformist Prime Minister under Nicholas II. - cue: Stolypin. [Reference: §1263]

580. Bogrov - Dmitry Bogrov, Stolypin's assassin; depicted as an archetype of dual loyalties. - cue: Bogrov. [Reference: §1263]

581. Great Purge - Period of political repression and mass arrests (1936-1938). - cue: Great Purge. [Reference: §29]

582. "Hawk" - Informal name for the Polikarpov I-16, a Soviet fighter aircraft. - cue: "Hawk". [Reference: not found]

583. 13th Department of the NKVD - fictional secret division for psychological, ideological and metaphysical warfare. - cue: th Department of the NKVD. [Reference: §459]

584. Blue Star - society allegedly targeted by the NKVD. - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

585. "Cerebral Liquefaction" - Imagined title for decadent Russian Symbolist poetry; reflects Rudnev's immersion in irrational aesthetics. - cue: "Cerebral Liquefaction". [Reference: not found]

586. In daemone deus - Theological expression meaning "God in the demon", used by Rudnev to explain totalitarian dialectics. - cue: In daemone deus. [Reference: §513]

587. Spiritualism, occultism, anthroposophy - Ideological or mystical currents monitored and suppressed by the NKVD. - cue: Spiritualism, occultism, anthroposophy. [Reference: not found]

588. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) - Successor to the NKVD, with expanded peacetime powers. - cue: Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). [Reference: §1355]

589. Prince of This World - The devil; theological root of Klimov's metaphysical-political thesis. - cue: Prince of This World. [Reference: §1]

590. Research Institute of Professor Rudnev - State-funded centre for ideological and metaphysical control. - cue: Research Institute of Professor Rudnev. [Reference: not found]

591. Agitprop - Agitation and Propaganda Department; Party body for ideological indoctrination. - cue: Agitprop. [Reference: §1367]

592. Guriya - transliterated term for courtesans around the MVD, applied here to women deployed for surveillance or seduction. - cue: Guriya. [Reference: §1369]

593. Agitprop - standard abbreviation for 'agitation and propaganda' instructor or officer, used throughout. - cue: Agitprop. [Reference: §1367]

594. Rituale Romanum - retained Latin title for the Roman Catholic exorcism liturgy. - cue: Rituale Romanum. [Reference: §1385]

595. Priesta New Ritual - rendered as titled in the text, retaining unconventional form. - cue: Priesta New Ritual. [Reference: §1389]

596. Legion - used symbolically for hosts of demons or spiritual forces; within the MVD code, also used as a category for ideologically infected individuals. - cue: Legion. [Reference: §35]

597. Dialectical Christianity - term used by Klimov's characters to describe a syncretic fusion of Christian theology with Marxist dialectics. - cue: Dialectical Christianity. [Reference: §726]

598. Higher sociology - an invented term by the MVD thinkers, suggesting a supra-Marxist spiritual analysis of historical and revolutionary processes. - cue: Higher sociology. [Reference: §757]

599. Marshal of State Security - Maksim's full rank, clarified for consistency. - cue: Marshal of State Security. [Reference: §40]

600. Legionary - extended use from previous; individuals 'possessed' in a spiritual or ideological sense. - cue: Legionary. [Reference: §1478]

601. Maternal complex - rendering of the 'matyerny kompleks', associated with Oedipal themes, as discussed in psychoanalytic idiom. - cue: Maternal complex. [Reference: §1504]

602. Legionisation - Klimov's coined term implying possession or corruption by satanic influence, frequently blamed for deviance. - cue: Legionisation. [Reference: §927]

603. Dog Crate - rendered for 'Sobachy yashchik', symbolist/anarchist publication; connected to themes of nihilism and literary grotesque. - cue: Dog Crate. [Reference: §1499]

604. Maternal complex - added for consistency with prior segment. - cue: Maternal complex. [Reference: §1504]

605. Ink-souls - literal rendering of ‘чернильные души’, a Klimovism for writers aligned with spiritual decay or cowardice. - cue: Ink. [Reference: §24]

606. Humanist/satanist - dual terms used in Klimov’s framing of esoteric societies; preserved as ideological slurs rather than clinical labels. - cue: Humanist/satanist. [Reference: not found]

607. Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin - formal full name usage - cue: Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. [Reference: §1556]

608. Kakhetian wine - Georgian wine variety - cue: Kakhetian wine. [Reference: §1564]

609. Red corner - agitational room in Soviet institutions - cue: Red corner. [Reference: §1570]

610. Obrez - here, rendered according to context: 'sawn-off' for weapons, 'circumcision' for the medical term - cue: Obrez. [Reference: §1584]

611. Kinto - Georgian urban tradesman/performer, used here to denote a type - cue: Kinto. [Reference: §1564]

612. Yersh - beer mixed with vodka - cue: Yersh. [Reference: §1589]

613. Torgsin - state-linked (as depicted) hard-currency shops in the USSR - cue: Torgsin. [Reference: §1600]

614. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - prison camp enforcer character - cue: Fedka the Cross. [Reference: §49]

615. Blue Star - ambiguous political charge (possibly as presented in the novel or as presented in the novel’s symbolism) - cue: Blue Star. [Reference: §659]

616. Party card - symbol of official Soviet Party membership, used metaphorically throughout - cue: Party card. [Reference: §872]

617. Dry-hander (сухоручка) - congenital disability of the hand - cue: Dry. [Reference: §172]

618. Carrionma - perhaps a distorted or ironic term for carcinoma - cue: Carrionma. [Reference: not found]

619. Katso - nickname of the minister (possibly Georgian) - cue: Katso. [Reference: §1712]

620. Power complex - as presented in the novel’s symbolism term for the brain’s governing function - cue: Power complex. [Reference: §499]

621. Monomakh’s Cap - traditional Russian symbol of royal power - cue: Monomakh’s Cap. [Reference: not found]

622. Harun al-Rashid - used metaphorically for an incognito ruler - cue: Harun al. [Reference: §1694]

623. MVD - Ministry of Internal Affairs - cue: MVD. [Reference: §1355]

624. Maksim Aleksanych - consistent rendering of character name - cue: Maksim Aleksanych. [Reference: §1698]

625. Baba Yaga - retained in transliteration as the canonical folkloric figure. - cue: Baba Yaga. [Reference: §1735]

626. Mau Mau - rendered directly; denotes the Kenyan anti-colonial society. - cue: Mau Mau. [Reference: §1733]

627. Mátyás Rákosi - red dictator of Hungary, retained standard spelling. - cue: Mátyás Rákosi. [Reference: §1731]

628. Ana Pauker - Romanian communist leader, retained standard spelling. - cue: Ana Pauker. [Reference: §1224]

629. János Kádár - Hungarian communist politician, standard spelling. - cue: János Kádár. [Reference: §1734]

630. Ngola Mbande and Nzinga - historical Angolan figures, transliterated as per scholarly conventions. - cue: Ngola Mbande and Nzinga.

631. Queen Nzinga (Nzinga Mbande) - Angolan queen, retained standard transliteration. - cue: Queen Nzinga (Nzinga Mbande).

632. Antonio de Gaeta, Giovanni de Montecuccolo - Capuchin missionaries, standard historical forms. - cue: Antonio de Gaeta, Giovanni de Montecuccolo. [Reference: not found]

633. Bishop Diego de Landa - Spanish missionary in Yucatán, historical name retained. - cue: Bishop Diego de Landa. [Reference: §1766]

634. Mujerado - Spanish colonial term used to denote ritual gender-altered attendants. - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

635. Modorra - preserved in Spanish as a culturally specific term. - cue: Modorra. [Reference: §1764]

636. Yuri Norozov - Soviet linguist credited with the decipherment of Maya script. - cue: Yuri Norozov. [Reference: §1769]

637. Rolf - German shepherd owned by Maksim Rudnev. - cue: Rolf. [Reference: §1364]

638. Pitirim - archbishop, now confirmed as a recurring character, general of the MVD in clerical disguise. - cue: Pitirim. [Reference: §1152]

639. Malinin - Lieutenant General and professor, associated with dark affairs of the MVD. - cue: Malinin. [Reference: §1772]

640. Можно-герлс - phonetic rendering preserved; see Note 1. - cue: Можно. [Reference: §1780]

641. CIA - Central Intelligence Agency, acronym undotted per style. - cue: CIA. [Reference: §20]

642. Berdyaev - Russian philosopher; added for philosophical reference. - cue: Berdyaev. [Reference: §690]

643. Ludovico Sinistrari - retained Latinised name; 17th-century Franciscan demonologist. - cue: Ludovico Sinistrari. [Reference: §1790]

644. Frederick Elworthy - author of The Evil Eye, retained historical spelling. - cue: Frederick Elworthy. [Reference: §1800]

645. Semyon Arshakovich Ter-Petrosyan (Kamo) - revolutionary associate of Stalin, now added with full name. - cue: Semyon Arshakovich Ter. [Reference: §1796]

646. Malinovsky - Bolshevik agent of the Tsarist secret police (Okhrana). - cue: Malinovsky. [Reference: §1807]

647. Okhrana - Tsarist secret police; historical institution, undotted acronym per house style. - cue: Okhrana. [Reference: §484]

648. Denis de Rougemont - Swiss philosopher, cited in political-theological context. - cue: Denis de Rougemont. [Reference: §1810]

649. Ilse Koch - Buchenwald commandant's wife, historical figure cited in Nuremberg context. - cue: Ilse Koch. [Reference: §1815]

650. Prince Oblonsky - satirical allusion to Tolstoy's character, here repurposed as a false noble. - cue: Prince Oblonsky. [Reference: §1826]

651. Mujerado - reappears in occult context; see prior glossary entries. - cue: Mujerado. [Reference: §1762]

652. Berdyaev - recurring figure; philosophical source of the Satan-Antichrist doctrine. - cue: Berdyaev. [Reference: §690]

653. "Blue Star" Case - introduced as an internal MVD case file; to be tracked if it reappears. - cue: "Blue Star" Case. [Reference: §1821]

654. Ivan Strannik - pseudonym of Mara's finger-made son, also known as Mort. - cue: Ivan Strannik. [Reference: §77]

655. Fedka the Cross-Eyed - bandit, central figure in the "Blue Star" case. - cue: Fedka the Cross. [Reference: §49]

656. Schwarz-Chernykh family - recurring demonic lineage introduced. - cue: Schwarz. [Reference: §1824]

657. Nagant - revolver, Russian service weapon. - cue: Nagant. [Reference: §113]

658. "Blue Star" case - extended file concerning Fedka and his family's origins. - cue: "Blue Star" case. [Reference: §1821]

659. Olga - recurring figure, here half-angel, half-Martian. - cue: Olga. [Reference: §108]

660. Zinaida Genrikhovna - NKVD general, described as a hybrid of Satan and the Antichrist. - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna. [Reference: §610]

661. Perekop - Crimean isthmus, site of civil war battles; here "semi-hero" reference. - cue: Perekop. [Reference: §614]

662. Toptygin - general-inquisitor figure, epaulettes with axes. - cue: Toptygin. [Reference: §1450]

663. Lombroso - Cesare Lombroso, criminologist. - cue: Lombroso. [Reference: §965]

664. Nordau - Max Nordau, philosopher and critic. - cue: Nordau. [Reference: §969]

665. Kierkegaard - Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher. - cue: Kierkegaard. [Reference: §973]

666. Freud - Sigmund Freud, psychoanalyst. - cue: Freud. [Reference: §23]

667. Beria L. P. - Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, NKVD chief. - cue: Beria L. P.. [Reference: §1873]

668. Lavrentiy Palych - Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, former Minister of Internal Affairs. - cue: Lavrentiy Palych. [Reference: §1877]

669. Cadets - Constitutional Democratic Party. - cue: Cadets. [Reference: not found]

670. “Formula of power” - explicitly tied here to sadism, homosexuality, impotence, and brain degeneration. - cue: “Formula of power”.

671. Red Pope - title used for Rudnev, implying supreme yet hidden power. - cue: Red Pope. [Reference: §1891]

672. Yezhov - former NKVD head, described as a degenerate and sexless creature. - cue: Yezhov. [Reference: §540]

673. Yagoda - NKVD chief, collector of poisons, executed. - cue: Yagoda. [Reference: §471]

674. Autotoxins - supposed internal poisons causing heart failure. - cue: Autotoxins. [Reference: §1899]

675. Citizen Berman - alias assigned to Beria after commutation of his death sentence. - cue: Citizen Berman. [Reference: §1903]

676. Phylloxera - grape root louse, used metaphorically in Rudnev’s advice. - cue: Phylloxera. [Reference: §1905]

677. Rossolimo - psychiatrist, canonical spelling - cue: Rossolimo. [Reference: §982]

678. Higher Sociology - rendered as ‘higher sociology’ per source - cue: Higher Sociology. [Reference: §757]

679. Power complex - fixed term introduced for комплекс власти - cue: Power complex. [Reference: §499]

680. Legionnaires - retained for легионеры per internal consistency - cue: Legionnaires. [Reference: §37]

681. Kaleidoscope - metaphor preserved as idiomatic match - cue: Kaleidoscope. [Reference: §1004]

682. Joseph Novak - fixed spelling for author - cue: Joseph Novak. [Reference: §2224]

683. Our Future, Comrade! - translated title of Novak’s memoir - cue: Our Future, Comrade!.

684. Abel Yenukidze - canonical rendering, with Abel preserved for biblical allusion - cue: Abel Yenukidze. [Reference: §2229]

685. Gerald Dickler - correct spelling - cue: Gerald Dickler. [Reference: §2230]

686. Man on Trial - translated book title, confirmed as historical reference - cue: Man on Trial. [Reference: §2230]

687. Thirteenth Department - retained as capitalised proper noun - cue: Thirteenth Department.

688. Donald Cory - fixed spelling - cue: Donald Cory. [Reference: §2236]

689. The Homosexual in America - canonical English title - cue: The Homosexual in America. [Reference: §2236]

690. Wilhelm Reich - canonical spelling - cue: Wilhelm Reich. [Reference: §2238]

691. The Sexual Revolution - confirmed book title - cue: The Sexual Revolution. [Reference: §2238]

692. Legionnaires / legion - continued as fixed term - cue: Legionnaires / legion. [Reference: not found]

693. Zhutovsky - transliteration for painter - cue: Zhutovsky. [Reference: §2260]

694. The Case of Comrade Tulayev - English title of Victor Serge's novel - cue: The Case of Comrade Tulayev. [Reference: §2269]

695. Victor Serge - fixed name for Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich - cue: Victor Serge. [Reference: §2269]

696. Arthur Koestler - canonical spelling - cue: Arthur Koestler. [Reference: §2277]

697. Darkness at Noon - confirmed English title - cue: Darkness at Noon. [Reference: §2277]

698. The Great Terror - title of Robert Conquest's book - cue: The Great Terror. [Reference: §2279]

699. George Kennan - ambassador, academic; retained per historical record - cue: George Kennan. [Reference: §2281]

700. Institute for Advanced Study - rendered for Принстонский Институт Повышенных Знаний - cue: Institute for Advanced Study. [Reference: §2281]

701. Nathan Leites - Harvard analyst associated with psycho-political strategy - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

702. Melvin Lasky / Der Monat - fixed forms - cue: Melvin Lasky / Der Monat.

703. Statue of Liberty - rendered directly; no added interpretation - cue: Statue of Liberty. [Reference: §2299]

704. Roman-Gazeta - rendered in transliteration as a Soviet literary journal - cue: Roman. [Reference: §175]

705. Novy Mir - transliterated as the well-known literary periodical - cue: Novy Mir.

706. Tvardovsky - fixed spelling for Aleksandr Tvardovsky, editor of Novy Mir - cue: Tvardovsky.

707. Wilhelm Reich - Author of The Sexual Revolution, cited on the Great Purge - cue: Wilhelm Reich. [Reference: §2238]

708. Thomas Mann - Nobel laureate referenced regarding degeneration - cue: Thomas Mann. [Reference: §36]

709. Jack Ruby - Killer of Lee Harvey Oswald - cue: Jack Ruby. [Reference: §25]

710. Lee Harvey Oswald - Assassin of US President John F. Kennedy - cue: Lee Harvey Oswald.

711. Maksim Rudnev - Fictional Marshal of State Security in The Prince - cue: Maksim Rudnev. [Reference: §49]

712. 13th Department - Ultra-secret police division in Klimov's novel - cue: th Department. [Reference: §14]

713. Institute of Black Professors - Fictional or metaphorical think tank in The Prince - cue: Institute of Black Professors. [Reference: §1979]

714. 9 September 1960 - Date of Khrushchev's New York visit; corrected from erroneous 1969 - cue: September 1960. [Reference: §2255]

715. Latent homosexuality - Term used for Kinsey's 33% category - cue: Latent homosexuality. [Reference: §2085]

716. Twilight of the gods - Literary reference to Hitler's death and marriage - cue: Twilight of the gods. [Reference: §2247]

717. Zhutovsky - Modernist artist confronted by Khrushchev in 1964 - cue: Zhutovsky. [Reference: §2260]

718. Victor Serge / Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich - Revolutionary writer; author of The Case of Comrade Tulayev - cue: Victor Serge / Sergei Lvovich Kibaltchich. [Reference: not found]

719. Bertram Wolfe - US State Department adviser and anti-communist writer; author of Strange Communists I Have Known - cue: Bertram Wolfe. [Reference: §2269]

720. Arthur Koestler - Novelist and former communist; author of Darkness at Noon and The Gladiators - cue: Arthur Koestler. [Reference: §2277]

721. Robert Conquest - British historian and poet; author of The Great Terror - cue: Robert Conquest. [Reference: §2279]

722. Voice of America - US state-run international broadcaster - cue: Voice of America. [Reference: §23]

723. Hoover Institute - Research centre at Stanford University focusing on war and revolution - cue: Hoover Institute. [Reference: §2276]

724. The Gladiators - Koestler's novel about Spartacus; referenced in bibliographies of homosexuality in literature - cue: The Gladiators. [Reference: §2278]

725. George Kennan (Jr.) - Former US ambassador to the USSR, Princeton professor, reviewer of The Great Terror - cue: George Kennan (Jr.).

726. George Kennan Sr. - Revolutionary propagandist among Russian POWs in Japan (1906) - cue: George Kennan Sr..

727. Nathan Leites - Harvard researcher linked to psychoanalytic study of Bolshevism - cue: Nathan Leites. [Reference: §19]

728. Melvin Lasky - Editor of Der Monat, chronicler of the Oxford Conference on anti-Bolshevik strategy - cue: Melvin Lasky. [Reference: §2285]

729. Institute for Advanced Study - Princeton-based research centre formerly home to Einstein - cue: Institute for Advanced Study. [Reference: §2281]

730. “Lenin complex” - Psychoanalytic interpretation of Lenin’s personality, linked to latent homosexuality - cue: “Lenin complex”. [Reference: §27]

731. Rorschach test - Psychological diagnostic tool cited in context of intelligence screening - cue: Rorschach test. [Reference: §25]

732. McCarthyism - US anti-communist purge era, likened here to the Soviet Great Purge - cue: McCarthyism. [Reference: §2290]

733. Great Seal of the United States - Symbol on the US $1 bill, analysed as esoteric social pyramid - cue: Great Seal of the United States. [Reference: §2297]

734. Statue of Liberty - Alleged gift from French esoteric societies with hidden symbolism - cue: Statue of Liberty. [Reference: §2299]

735. social modernism - Coined here to describe Klimov’s hybrid of socialist realism and modernist critique - cue: social modernism. [Reference: §2303]

736. tainopis - “secret writing” or coded language used to conceal meaning in plain sight - cue: tainopis. [Reference: §2306]

737. ved’ma / vedun - Witch/seer in Old Russian, derived from vedat’, “to know” - cue: ved’ma / vedun. [Reference: not found]

738. Commissar Rudnev - Fictional head of State Security in The Prince, analogue to Dr Faust - cue: Commissar Rudnev. [Reference: §463]

739. Freudian revolution - The notion that revolutionary behaviour is driven by psycho-sexual complexes - cue: Freudian revolution.

740. elixir of life - Cryptic metaphor in the novel, possibly tied to coded degeneracy - cue: elixir of life. [Reference: §1054]

741. Zinaida Genrikhovna / Hero of Perekop - Allegorical or symbolic characters in The Prince - cue: Zinaida Genrikhovna / Hero of Perekop.